# MEMOIRS

OF THE

# FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIONS.

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VOLUME I.





Oliv. Wolcott.

# MEMOIRS

OF THE

# ADMINISTRATIONS

OF

# WASHINGTON AND JOHN ADAMS,

EDITED FROM THE PAPERS OF

## OLIVER WOLCOTT,

SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

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BY GEORGE GIBBS.

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"NULLIUS ADDICTUS JURARE IN VERBA MAGISTRI."

IN TWO VOLUMES,

VOL. I.

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# PREFACE.

No writer probably ever escaped criticism by deprecating it. Least of all can one claim an exemption who has awakened anew, quarrels which, if not forgotten, have been suffered to slumber, and renewed a warfare which had slackened in its animosity. The editor of these volumes certainly can claim no favour as a right, and solicits none in mercy. He has ventured to put his case on the merits and must stand or fall by them.

One thing only he would say, and that somewhat perhaps in the style of the painter who labelled his animals lest they should be mistaken. It is, to explain the design on which he has proceeded. His first intention was merely to produce a biographical sketch of an honored parent, whose services he believed entitled him to such commemoration, and whose actions he conceived had been misunderstood and misrepresented. An examination of the field and the materials at his disposal afterwards changed this design; and he resolved to exhibit as much of the history and politics of certain periods connected with Mr. Wolcott's life as the nature and extent of these papers seemed to warrant; in the hope that some light (if only a few rays, so that they were distinct ones) might be shed upon the path through which as a nation

we have travelled. The life of the individual has therefore been made subservient to a wider design—the contribution of materials for a biography of party. Whether the alteration has been a wise one, so far as success is concerned, the judgment of others must decide. Written with discrimination, a memoir of Mr. Wolcott would have possessed interest as that of a man having strong personal characteristics, and at the same time presenting the type of a class. The attempt, if unsuccessful, would at any rate have involved less disgrace in its quiet descent to that respectable oblivion whither so many have preceded it. He has, however, ventured upon a different task, with little expectation, it is true, of producing a work of historical merit, but (nor is the distinction a paradox) with that of offering one of historical value. It pretends to no perspective of narration—there has been no attempt to treat of its subjects in their relative proportions. Importance has sometimes produced enlargement—abundance of material or novelty much oftener. He has considered at all times the matter introduced as possessing the chief importance, and his own comments or details merely secondary; he has therefore preserved and presented that matter with scrupulous fidelity, nothing having been kept back which affected the subject in hand, or which candor, fairness, or its necessity to the whole truth required to be exhibited. He has not, indeed, considered it necessary to cumber a work, perhaps injudiciously expanded, by all the domestic and business details of private correspondence or with multiplied repetitions of the same ideas; he has, therefore, in some instances, as will be seen in the work itself, furnished only

extracts from correspondence; but no suppressions have been made of political matter—no opinions or remarks have been withheld as injudicious or censurable. In one word, he has neither garbled anything which he has pretended to insert, nor kept back anything which he thought worth inserting. In the openness of friendly intercourse, men say and write much that they would not justify to their own minds; no sensible reader, however, but can make these allowances. Men are to be judged not by a single and perhaps floating thought, but by the tenor of their ordinary language and the sum of their whole lives. The squeamishness which would present a statesman, a thinker, or a writer, ever with his best foot foremost, is contemptible in itself, and manifests a distrust of the subject. With these views he has, preferring that to the opposite error, perhaps admitted matter which good taste would have wished to exclude.

Of the great mass of correspondence preserved by Mr. Wolcott, difficulty has been experienced in deciding what to reject. There were many letters interesting to readers in a particular section of the country, which would not prove so to all; there were others valuable only as showing the unanimity, or difference of opinion on public measures in distant states; there were some merely curious as illustrating the character of individuals. To throw aside all these would give to the work an incompleteness in the estimation of those whose judgment was to be regarded; and the work of rejection has therefore, in this respect also, been exercised with a more sparing hand, than the writer's own choice would have dictated. The selections have been made from some twenty volumes of

letters ; the whole MSS. collection, including revolutionary correspondence, drafts of official papers, and miscellaneous documents extending to nearly fifty. These papers were all carefully arranged by Mr. Wolcott himself. It is believed that the general value of what is published, will be regarded as an apology for any defect in judgment in the selection. The letters of Hamilton, Cabot, Ames, Griswold, King, and others, will be in the eyes of every student a mine of political history. They will give a more just view of the actual opinions and objects of those men, than the hostility of their opponents has hitherto permitted. They will be found honorable alike to the patriotism and the sagacity of the federal leaders.

The bulk of the work has arrested it at the downfall of the federal ascendancy. Should, however, public favor justify its resumption; materials, and those of equal value, remain for an exposition of the subsequent history of that party, and of the principles and acts of their successors in power.

By some, the editor may be censured for the harshness with which he has treated political opponents ; whose enmities have long since died with them, or at least long since become inactive. To those he would say, that a willingness to shun controversy, to avoid embittering the feelings, or wounding the affections of the living, would have induced him to spare attacks upon individuals; had not higher than mere personal considerations dictated his course. He has felt himself not only the vindicator, but in some sort the avenger, of a by-gone party and a buried race. The men whose characters and conduct he has held up to scorn or to reproach, spared none. No integrity

in public service, or purity in private life, no sanctity of official reputation, or of domestic ties, were by them regarded. Deliberately and wickedly they lied down men whom they could not cope with in a fairer field. Their hatred followed the federalists to the place of daily toil and to the evening hearth; it stopped not with their overthrow, nor relented at their graves. It mingled with the funeral wail of a nation at the death of Washington; it exulted over the assassination of Hamilton; and trampled the turf which covered the dust of Ames. That they wrested from the federal party the government of the nation was nothing; it is the means by which they compassed its destruction, the use they made of their victory, and the lasting consequences of their misgovernment which are condemned. To whom is it owing that the names of the great founders of the republic are by-words for political hacks to carp at? To whom is it attributable, that however just a measure, however called for by national policy, it is enough to term it "federal" to defeat it? To whom that the hireling of party finds reason enough for the denial of individual justice in the opinions of the applicant? To whom that demagoguism rides triumphant to high places, corruption prevails in the morals of the nation, and sedition is fostered to the overthrow of law?

To the historian there is no statute of limitations against political crimes.

"The evil that men do LIVES AFTER THEM."

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# MEMOIRS

OF THE

# FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIONS.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

Few periods in history have been fraught with more important consequences than that following the adoption of our Constitution. There had been revolutions before ours; weaker nations had thrown off the yoke of greater, under circumstances perhaps more remarkable; monarchies had been overturned and republics founded on their ruins: but in every former instance the few had imposed a system upon the many. Philosophers too, in their closets, had devised Utopian schemes of government which, unnatural in their origin, had always signally failed, but the people were now to try an experiment of their own.

To the American colonies self government was not a novelty, for they had grown up in it, and in later times only had control been forced upon them. Man had here matured like the trees of the forest, in his native character. The hot bed culture, the pruning and training into established forms, of European countries, was unknown. No antiquated customs, no feudal usages fettered the free development of the mind; the laws had adapted themselves to man's wants, not distorted him to their shape. The great principles of human freedom had sprung up with the colonies, and its truths were recognised as self evident in the farm yard and the log hut.

The character and objects of the American war have been often strangely misapprehended. It was in truth what Burke termed it, not a revolution, but a revolution prevented. It was simply the exercise of the power inherent in the organization of society to resist the enforcement of authority inconsistent with its well being. It was in the outset a revolt, based on the same principles, advocated by the same men, as those which had distinguished and maintained that against Charles. The course of events made it indeed a war of independence; but there was in its tone nothing revolutionary, nothing subversive of the established order of things. Some leaders more far seeing than the rest, had predicted the result; but what the people wanted, what they took up arms to get, was not some new privilege, some new liberty, but the security of rights, privileges and immunities, which they had always had. Once committed they were indeed driven to independence for safety's sake. Even the abolishment of royalty they had not originally intended, for abstract royalty with three thousand miles of deep water between it and them, troubled them little, so only that they had their own legislatures, and were taxed by those alone. What we find in their speeches, what we read in the writings of those days has much about birthright and inheritance, charters and the privileges of English-born subjects, and very little about the rights of man. The little of this that came in afterwards, was not of native growth, nor indigenous to the soil. New England, the New England yeomanry, the representative of that stubborn, orderly race of resistants which had laid the foundations of Old England's liberties, was little given to speculation. Certain definite and distinct ideas the people had touching rights which were the privilege of Englishmen every where, and in their view not necessarily the privilege of any other nation; indeed they rather claimed the exclusive monopoly of them. To maintain these as their inheritance they

considered due to their posterity; to maintain them their fathers had cut off the head of one king by sentence of a high tribunal, and had deposed another by act of parliament; to maintain them still they were ready to rebel against the usurpations of the throne, or if need be of parliament itself. The doctrine of the divine right of Kings was exploded even in England. One Protector and two dynasties of monarchs, had reigned by divine right of parliament. The principle that government was intended for the good of the governed, was to them self evident; the consequence, that the governed were to prescribe how it should be exercised, was equally plain; and the attempts of parliament to violate the principle were subjects of resistance as well as those of the throne. This it was that they fought for, and in this there was no revolution—the revolution came afterwards.

Democracy as a theory was not as yet. The habits and manners of the people were indeed essentially democratic in their simplicity and equality of condition, but this might exist under any form of government. Their governments were then purely republican. They had gone but a short way into those philosophical ideas which characterised the subsequent, and real revolution, in France. The great state papers of American liberty, were all predicated on the abuse of chartered, not of abstract rights. The complaints against government, were of violation of these.

Thus they protested, first against invasions of parliament on their charters, next against the bad advice of ministers to their King, and it was only when in the execution of acts of parliament, the King made himself the active agent of parliamentary and ministerial usurpation; when he appeared as the appointing power by which despotic governors ruled, and leaders of standing armies enforced their mandates, that they included him in their denunciation, and repudiated an allegiance which

was binding only while expedient. The vitality of the instrument of Independence itself, was derived from the specification of actual wrongs and grievances, in violation of subsisting relations between a particular community and its government, in violation, in a word, of the British Constitution. There was no more of modern democracy in the American war of independence, than in the great Rebellion, or the deposition of James the second. The "fierce democratie" of which Milton sung, knew little of the theories of Condorcet or of Jefferson.

Whatever truth there may be in such doctrines, however consistent their free exercise with the organization of society under particular phases, these were not the principles of the fathers of English or American liberty, these were not the objects of their efforts. Government is progressive like every other science, truth itself is progressive; for what to one age is fact to the next is falsehood. The war of 1775 was commenced with definite objects, its apology was founded upon the terms of an existing compact. A broken Covenant was its cause and its vindication. For the reality and the success of our own progression, experience must in like wise answer.

Early in the war it was seen that a continuance of the union, adventitious as it had been in its commencement, and brought about by common wrongs alone, was vitally necessary to preserve the ends it was first intended to effect; but the original connection, too slight even under the influence of external pressure and immediate danger, when that had passed, threatened a speedy dissolution. "Experience, the only teacher of nations,"[a] at length forced upon the minds of all a conviction of its inadequacy; and the thirteen states, too weak to stand alone, too jarring in their views to preserve unbroken the mere league which had hitherto bound them, were moulded into a single

[a] Fisher Ames.

republic, that one great common concern, one national character should overpower all other interests; that their people should have "one country, one constitution, one destiny."[a] Under this constitution, a scheme of popular creation, it was to be tried whether, unobstructed and unaided by external causes, self government was capable of existence on a scale of magnitude and importance.

Half a century has passed away since this experiment began, and the foundation of that government, is now a matter of History. Already a posterity looks back with curious eyes at the influences which moulded its form, the causes which operated on its advancement, the gradual development of its policy, and the character and views of the men who stood forth the exponents of the national mind.

The time may not indeed have arrived, when the political history of the country can be fully written, for the ashes are yet warm beneath the feet of him who would tread back upon the steps of our former years. With nations too, as with individuals, we derive the most profitable results from their existence, when that existence has either reached its end, or has at least passed some grand climacteric, some period marked with eventful influence on its destiny or its character. But the materials which can hereafter aid in attaining these results, the moral of a nation's life, are at all times worth treasuring.

"Empires like men must increase, decay, and become extinguished. But this necessary revolution has often hidden causes which the veil of time conceals from us, and which mystery or their apparent minuteness has even sometimes hid from the eyes of contemporaries."[b]

It may happen that this fabric of our own, in the construction of which so much wisdom, so much genius, and so much labor were employed, against which so many

[a] Daniel Webster.

[b] D'Alembert. Eloge de Montesquieu.

and violent attacks have been turned, will share the fate of other similar structures; that anarchy and resulting despotism will rise upon its ruins; or that separated by its own weight and the discordant character of its materials, it will break into fragments. Our descendants then should have the means of judging, whether from inherent defects in its construction, or from the characters of those to whom its keeping shall have been committed, either catastrophe befel it; that they may guard against a like disaster, and that the eternal principles of human right may not suffer by the condemnation of an instrument designed to promote and to establish them. Or if, as we hope, that fabric is destined to a long duration, to attain a vigor "matured, not decayed by age," they should know to what principles it owes its vitality, and to whom they may ascribe the wisdom which created, and the foresight which preserved it.

Of the sources from which this knowledge may be derived, perhaps none bears more faithfully the impress of truth, than the correspondence of individuals who either took a prominent rank in public affairs, or who from their station were enabled to view correctly the acts and purposes of those who did. However we may now differ in conclusions, we at least see in the unreserved and unstudied communications of men, made in the confidence of friendship, the premises on which their opinions were based, and the governing motives of their conduct. Thus as every man in proportion to his standing among, and connection with his fellows, is more or less their representative; in arriving at a just perception of the individual mind, we see also the spirit of bodies whose lives are written only in the aggregate.

In these pages will be found a free expression of the opinions of many persons, distinguished in the ranks of one of the two great political sects which, formed contemporaneously with our present government, in their struggles for power and alternate successes, have influ-

enced its course and left their stamp upon its policy. The original distinctions of both, have in a great measure been lost in the new relations which have since arisen, while each has imparted a portion of its character to all. The federalists had in great measure the advantage of giving its tone to the Constitution, and of directing the government during the first years of its existence. On them therefore lies the responsibility of success, so far as their policy was adopted and has been pursued. Hence it is important, as well for the full understanding of their political system, as for the just appreciation of their motives and their capacity, that the fullest exposition of their views and designs be made. If in executing the high trust which the nation confided to them, they wantonly abused that confidence, if they were indeed guilty of the nefarious plans and corrupt practices which have been imputed to them by their opponents, let them be branded with the infamy so justly due. If an ignorant or mistaken policy has brought weighty political evils upon the country, let that too be visited with condemnation; but if inquiry and experience shall prove that their measures were dictated by patriotism and honesty of purpose, and were in themselves wise and enlightened, justice and gratitude demand that we should know and acknowledge it.

Of the individual, from the records of whose official life these pages are in great measure derived, some account is here requisite as an introduction. It will be understood that the prominence given to himself and to his department through the narrative, results from no undue estimate of their importance, but from the source of the materials.

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The family of Wolcott were among the earliest of the colonists of New England, Henry Wolcott the ancestor, having emigrated from the mother country in 1630, to escape

the religious persecutions of the day. He belonged to the congregation of Mr. Warham, which settled Dorchester in Massachusetts, and afterwards removed to Windsor upon Connecticut, being one of the five at whose expense the expedition was chiefly conducted. He had been a man of considerable estate in landed property, a great part of which he sold and employed in bringing out the colony of which he was a member.

His eldest son, of the same name, was one of the patentees under the Charter of Charles II., and for many years a magistrate of the Colony. Simon, another son, was a farmer in Windsor and left a numerous issue, of whom the youngest was Roger Wolcott, a man distinguished in the annals of the province both for his civil and military services. He was originally a weaver by trade, and possessed no other education than such as he had been able to acquire during the intervals of daily labor, amidst extreme poverty, and in a settlement which afforded no advantages. The Indian and French wars opened to him a more congenial pursuit than his trade, and by his ability and courage he gained a high reputation throughout the colonies. He was successively a member of the assembly and of the council, a judge of the County Court, Deputy Governor, chief judge of the Superior Court, and Governor. When the expedition against Cape Breton under Col. Pepperrell was undertaken in 1745, as Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut he commanded the troops sent by that province, and as Major General and second officer of the expedition, was present at the capture of Louisbourg. He died in 1767, at the age of eighty-nine.

Oliver, the youngest son of Roger Wolcott, entered the army in 1747, being then twenty-one years of age, as a captain in the service of New York, and served in the defence of the northern frontier, until the peace of Aix La Chapelle. He then returned to Connecticut and studied medicine. In 1751, he established himself in the town of

Litchfield, and on the organization of the county of that name was chosen its first sheriff. From this time to the commencement of the revolutionary war he held many civil offices in the province. By the aid of a farm and his practice, he in due time found himself in condition to marry, and accordingly took to wife Lorrain Collins of Guilford, a lady who to good family and personal attractions, added some other qualities more essential to the mate of one who was to be a leader in a revolution. She possessed a degree of courage remarkable even in those days of female heroism, and a masculine judgment and business character which seconded effectually her husband's pursuits, while they lightened their burden.

They had four children, two sons and two daughters, the eldest of whom, also named Oliver, is the subject of this memoir. He was born at Litchfield, on the 11th of January, 1760.

The rudiments of his education he received at the common town school, of which one Master Beckwith was then teacher. Beckwith was a mild man, more devoted to the fishing rod than the birch, and under his tuition the pupil made at least as much proficiency in angling and squirrel shooting as in Lilly's grammar. Maternal anxiety for his health, which was delicate, gave him perhaps a larger liberty in this respect, and he improved it to the acquiring of an iron constitution. At odd hours he was employed in tending the cattle and the other occupations of a farmer's son.

At a period much later than this, Litchfield was on the outskirts of New England civilization, and presented a very different aspect from its now venerable quiet. The pickets which guarded its first dwellings were not yet decayed. The Indian yet wandered through its broad streets, and hunters as wild as our present borderers, chased the deer and the panther on the shores of the lake. The manners of its inhabitants were as simple and primitive

as those of their fathers, a century back, in the older settlements on the Connecticut. Travelling was entirely on horseback, except in the winter, and but a casual intercourse was carried on with the distant towns. Occasionally, and more frequently, as they became more interesting, tidings reached them from Boston, and even from the old world. Here among the mountains the future Secretary passed a tolerably happy boyhood, except when on Sundays he was encased in a suit of tight scarlet breeches and forced to wear shoes, a penance reserved for that day, and endured with much dissatisfaction.

At the age of thirteen he had mastered the lore then requisite for entering college. His father, although considering him too young, was yet willing to let him exercise his own discretion, or perhaps catch a glimpse of the world. The outfit of a student was not cumbrous, and mounted on a steady horse, with a passport to the clergy on the road, Master Oliver for the first time left his native village.

His first halt was at the venerable parson Trumbull's, the father of the poet, John Trumbull. In an account of this adventure written some years after, he says: "I found parson Trumbull in the field superintending laborers. He received me well, ordered my horse to be taken care of, and invited me to a farmer's dinner. He looked kindly at me, and placing his hand on my head said, I was one of the old stock of Independents. I did not then understand his meaning, but as it was said to be a family characteristic, I recollected it ever after. I was dismissed in season to get down to parson Leavenworth's, at Waterbury, before sunset. Here I found another agricultural clergyman, who lived well in a good house, but in a poor parish, where the lands did not enable his parishioners to afford a support equal to that received by parson Trumbull. On asking my name, placing his hands on my head, he enquired whether I intended, if I

was able, to be like old Noll, a republican and a King Killer? These words were new phrases to my ears, but I treasured them in my memory."

After spending a week in viewing New Haven, some mysterious apprehensions of the coming trial, and the awe inspired by the solemn wigs and robes worn by the professors, convinced him, what his father's opinion had failed to do, that he was too young to enter college. He therefore retraced his steps, pondering on the wonders he had seen, and on his newly discovered family characteristic. The year after however, 1774, he returned to New Haven and entered the college. Thick coming events soon explained the meaning of his clerical friends.

Of Wolcott's class, there were several who afterwards became eminent in different pursuits. Among them may be mentioned Noah Webster, Joel Barlow, Uriah Tracy and Zephaniah Swift. One of them, Dr. Webster, speaks as follows of Wolcott's collegiate reputation. "I was an intimate friend, class-mate, and for some months room-mate with Gov. Wolcott. My acquaintance with him was of nearly sixty years duration. I found him always frank and faithful in his friendship, and generous to the extent of his means. He was in college a good scholar, though not brilliant. He possessed the firmness and strong reasoning powers of the Wolcott family, but with some eccentricities in reasoning."

General Wolcott, Oliver's father, became during this year a member of the Council, and was afterwards annually re-elected until 1786. His former military services, his known probity and judgment, his ardent attachment to the republican cause, and perhaps not least, the influence of his family name, always a powerful advantage in the Puritan states, had contributed to give him an extended influence, and he now exerted it effectually in bringing about a compromise of the boundary controversies between New York and Vermont, and Pennsylvania and

Connecticut, and in uniting the border settlers in support of the war. In July, 1775, he was appointed by the Continental Congress, in conjunction with Philip Schuyler and others, one of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs for the northern department, a trust of great importance; and in October of the same year was elected a delegate to the Congress of 1776, in which capacity he signed the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

From this time to the end of the war, he was constantly engaged, either in the council or in the field. During the intervals of Congressional duty, he employed his time in raising and disciplining forces, and in correspondence on military subjects. A large proportion of the troops in service during the northern campaign, consisted of his drafts, and he commanded between one and two thousand men in person at the reduction of Burgoyne's army.

These were some of the services of General Wolcott during the war of Independence. There were very many whose names occupy a more conspicuous place in the history of that contest, but there was no one who in his own province redeemed more faithfully than he, the pledge of the SIGNERS.[a] Of the principal features in his character were his indomitable resolution and unspotted integrity. It might be said of him as Jenkins said of Coke, that "he was one whom power could not break, nor favor bend."[b]

During his continued absence from home, Mrs. Wolcott managed his farm and educated his younger children; thus enabling him to devote himself to the public service unfettered by private anxieties. Indeed her devotion to the cause was not exceeded by that of her husband, and the family underwent privation and fatigue during some of the

[a] Gen. Wolcott remained in Congress till the end of the war. In 1784–85, he was again a Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the northern department, and with Richard Butler and Arthur Lee, prescribed the terms of peace to the Six Nations. From 1786 he was annually elected Lieutenant Governor until 1796, when he was chosen Governor, which office he held till his death in December, 1797, in the 72d year of his age.

[b] Preface to the "Centuries."

years of the revolution, which, not uncommon then, would startle the matrons of our more peaceful days.

Such were the family influences under which Oliver Wolcott grew up, and such too nerved the minds and deepened the lines of character of many who in after days stood high in the national councils.

In April 1777 his studies were broken in upon, by a call to a less peaceful scene than the groves of Yale. He had gone to Litchfield on a visit to his mother, his father being absent attending Congress, when the news arrived that a large body of the British under Tryon, had landed and marched to Danbury to destroy the continental stores. Awakened at midnight by the summons to repair to the rendezvous of the militia, he armed himself; and his mother furnishing his knapsack with provisions and a blanket, hastened his departure and dismissed him with the charge "to conduct like a good soldier."

The party to which he was attached reached the enemy at Wilton where a skirmish took place, in which as well as in the subsequent attacks during the retreat of the British, Wolcott participated.

The next year he took his degree at Yale College, and immediately commenced the study of law at Litchfield under Tapping Reeve. In 1779, after the destruction of Fairfield and Norwalk, he attended his father as a volunteer aid, to the coast. At the close of this service he was offered a commission in the continental service, which he declined in consequence of having already entered upon his professional studies. He however shortly after accepted a commission in the Quarter Master's department, which being stationary at Litchfield would the less interfere with them.

During the severe winter of 1779–80, famine added its terrors to excessive cold. The deep snows in the mountain region of the State and the explosion of the paper system, rendered it almost impossible to procure the

necessaries of life. Connecticut had been in the foremost rank of the supporters of the war; she had contributed freely from her narrow resources, and the blood of her sons had fattened every battle-field. Never the seat of much opulence, the few individuals who had possessed comparative wealth were reduced to indigence, the towns were burdened with the support of the families of soldiers in addition to the usual poor. And now when cold and hunger threatened their utmost rigors, when a dark cloud hung over the fate of the country, when misfortune attended its arms and bankruptcy its treasury, the courage of her citizens failed not. The records of her towns, the votes of recruits to the army, and of bread to the suffering, showed that she had counted the cost of the struggle and was willing to meet it. It may well be supposed that the resources of so zealous an advocate for the war as General Wolcott, were not withheld, Every dollar that could be spared from the maintenance of the family, was expended in raising and equipping men; every blanket not in actual use was sent to the army, and the sheets were torn into bandages or cut into lint, by the hands of his wife and daughters. During almost the whole of this winter he had been with Congress, and his absence threw upon young Oliver an almost insupportable burden, in obtaining fuel and provisions for the family, and in keeping open the roads for the transportation of stores. At that time the line of travelling and carriage, from New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, to Pennsylvania, had in consequence of the incursions of the enemy, been turned northward of the Highlands of New York. Much of the army stores and ordnance had been deposited at Litchfield, and in his capacity of Quarter Master, the charge of providing for their safe keeping and conveyance, fell upon him.

One family anecdote is interesting and may be mentioned here, although the circumstance occurred earlier in the

war. Before the revolution, a leaden equestrian Statue of George III., stood in the Bowling Green in the City of New York. At the breaking out of the war this statue was overthrown, and lead being highly valuable, was sent to General Wolcott's at Litchfield for safe keeping; where, in process of time it was cut up and run into bullets by his daughters and their friends. An account of the number of cartridges made by each, is still preserved among the family papers. This conversion of a monarch into practical arguments of the rights of the people, as may be supposed, furnished abundant material for the wits of the day.

The hospitalities of his house and his father's public character, introduced young Wolcott to many persons of distinction in the army and in Congress. In the year 1780, he thus received General Washington, who with his suite, among whom were Hamilton and Meade, passed through the district. The arduous duties thrown upon him at so early a period of his life, and his constant intercourse with men, were high advantages in their influence in forming and ripening his character.

In January, 1781, he became of age, and was immediately admitted to the bar. He shortly after removed to Hartford. Such was his poverty, that he left home with no more than three dollars in his pocket, and to defray his expenses, on reaching Hartford he accepted a clerkship in the office of the Committee of Pay-Table, with a salary amounting to about fifty cents per diem, in specie value.

His diligence in this employment attracted the notice of the General Assembly, who in January, 1782, unsolicited, appointed him one of the members of the Committee, at that time the central board of accounts. Being the junior member, it became a part of his duty to call upon the Council of Safety at their almost daily sittings, and receive and execute their directions. There, under the keen inspection of Governor Trumbull and the Council, he became

initiated into the system of conducting public affairs, and personally known to many of the prominent characters in different departments. His labors from this time to the end of the war were incessant. Cut off from the society natural to his age, and at twenty-one thrown upon his own resources, in a situation arduous and responsible, associating with men of ability, he acquired the self confidence, the intense application to business, practical habits and iron perseverance which formed the basis of his success in life.

In May, 1784, he was appointed a Commissioner for the State of Connecticut, in concert with Oliver Ellsworth, with full power to adjust and settle the accounts and claims of the State against the United States, with the Commissioner on the part of Congress. This duty, which was continued through several years, was performed in addition to his ordinary occupation as a member of the board of Pay-Table. During that year, finding that the constant attention required by the duties of his office destroyed all prospect of professional advancement, he requested from the General Assembly a dismission from the office. The following resolution was passed by the two Houses.

"In the Upper House—

"On the foregoing representation the said Oliver Wolcott, Jun'r., is excused from constant attendance as one of the Committee of Pay-Table, but is *desired* to attend occasionally, when by the absence of the rest of the Committee or otherwise, his attendance may be necessary, and it may be convenient for him, so long as he shall reside in Hartford.

Teste, GEORGE WYLLYS, Sec'y."

"In the Lower House—

"Concurred, with the following alteration, viz., expunging the words *is desired*, in the second line of the vote of the Hon. Upper House, and in lieu thereof insert the words, "he is expected."

Teste, ISAAC BALDWIN, Clerk.

"Concurred in the Upper House,

Teste, GEORGE WYLLYS, Sec'y."

Under this partial dismission however, he was still almost constantly employed in the State service. In May, 1788, the committee of Pay-Table was abolished, and the office of Comptroller of Public Accounts instituted, to which their duties and some others, until then differently distributed, were assigned. Wolcott was appointed Comptroller, and arranged the financial affairs of the state anew, in a manner which met the approval of the Assembly, and has since been tested by experience. In this post he continued until the establishment of the National Treasury, in the fall of the succeeding year.

In 1785 he had married Elizabeth, the only daughter of Col. John Stoughton, a descendant of one of the families who settled Windsor, and a distinguished officer in the French war.

During his residence in Hartford he formed or cemented a friendship with a number of men, then young, but afterwards well known for their wit and literary attainments. Such were John Trumbull, Dr. Lemuel Hopkins, Richard Alsop, Barlow and Webster. Few cities in the union could boast of a more cultivated or intelligent society than Hartford, whether in its men or women, and during the intervals of business Wolcott was enabled, in the study of the English classical writers and intercourse with educated minds, to make amends for the irregularities of his education. He never, even during the pressing occupations of after life, forgot his literary tastes; his powerful memory enabling him to recal long passages of the English poets, with whom he was especially familiar.

Among his earlier correspondence are several of Barlow's letters, written within a few years after the close of their college life. In one of these the latter thus advises the cultivation by his friend of his own favorite pursuit.

"Now respecting yourself, I think it is a shame to the world and a dishonor to yourself that you should bind your whole attention to the Law and neglect the fine arts,

and especially Poetry, a study of all others the most capable of a delicate sublimity which is exactly suited to your genius. I have been waiting a long time to see some of your poetry and saw it not. I hope ere long to rejoice in the vision."

Whether seduced by this advice or from his own motion is not known, but Wolcott certainly did achieve some poems, among which is one entitled "The Judgment of Paris," of which it is only necessary to say, it would be much worse than Barlow's epic, if it were not much shorter.

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During the first session of Congress under the new Constitution of the United States, acts were passed creating three departments; that of foreign affairs, afterwards denominated of State, the Treasury and the War Departments.

In September their respective heads were selected, Mr. Jefferson being appointed secretary of State, Col. Hamilton of the Treasury and General Knox of War. Mr. Edmund Randolph was made Attorney General. Until the arrangement of the new offices, their duties were performed by those under the old system. It was not until November that the business of the Treasury was entered upon in earnest. In August, Wolcott was induced by the advice of his friends, to offer himself as a candidate for office in the Treasury, and his application, seconded by the Connecticut delegation, procured his appointment as auditor, whose duties were in some degree analogous to those he had performed in the state service. The letter he wrote to president Washington on this occasion, he has mentioned as, "the only application, direct or indirect, which he ever made for any office under the United States, or the state of Connecticut."

From this date to the fall of his party in 1801, he re-

mained uninterruptedly in the employ of the federal government.

The following letters may serve as a kind of personal introduction.

FROM JEREMIAH WADSWORTH.

New York, August 12th, 1789.

Dear Sir,

I have had it in contemplation to write to you some time, but have been so busily employed that I could not get time. What I have to propose to you, is to write to the President and offer yourself for an office in the Finance or Treasury, referring him to the Senate and Representatives, where tell him if he finds a single objection, you will withdraw your application. I recommend the application because every body applies, and because Connecticut having no claimants for national office out of it, (but you, if you become one,) I think you can probably succeed. I am in haste, Dear Sir, yours, &c.,

JERE. WADSWORTH.

TO JEREMIAH WADSWORTH.

Hartford, August 15th, 1789.

Dear Sir,

I have been honoured with your favour of the 12th of August, and now take the liberty to enclose to your care a letter to the President of the United States, in which I have offered myself as a candidate for an office in the Treasury Department, agreeably to your advice. I have ventured to take this liberty as I am unwilling to have it known that I have made an application, in case it should not succeed.

I feel grateful to you for the trouble you have already taken, but must beg of you, if it can be done with propriety, to have matters so arranged that no appointment be given to me, unless it be one which I can accept with some prospect of reputation. Those offices which relate to a treasury, and are merely mechanical, are in my opinion very undesirable. If the duties are not properly discharged, they produce ruin and disgrace ; if they are discharged well, intense application is necessary, and success will only acquire the reputation of an honest, plodding fellow of little genius or ability. As I have made an application, it will be improper for me to refuse any appointment that may be given, though I should not choose to relinquish my present situation to enter on a service in New York, equally burdensome and more dependent.

I hope you will not infer from all this that I have become vain and self sufficient. I am sensible that there are some duties connected with the Treasury Department to which I am by no means competent, and it is impossible for me to judge what situation is most proper for me. I shall therefore implicitly rely on your judgment and friendship, after having communicated these few ideas on the subject.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

Hartford, August 15th, 1789.

Sir,

I beg leave, with diffidence, to offer myself as a candidate for an appointment under the government of the United States. If I may be allowed to judge of my own qualifications, they are most suitable to some business in the Finance or Treasury Department.

The gentlemen who represent the State of Connecticut, in the Senate and House of Representatives, are best acquainted with the degree of merit on which I venture to found this application. If they do not concur in a proper recommendation, I cannot hope and do not wish to succeed.

In case this request shall on inquiry be found to have originated in no improper estimate of my own merits, and shall be favorably received, sentiments of personal gratitude will be added to those, which duty and patriotism have already excited, which will strongly prompt me to contribute whatever may be in my power, to the success and prosperity of your administration.

## FROM OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

New York, Sept. 12th, 1789.

Dear Sir,

The Treasury Department is at length arranged and filled.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Secretary, | - | $3500 | Col. Hamilton, New York. |
| Comptroller, | - | 2000 | Mr. Eveleigh, South Carolina. |
| Auditor, | - | 1500 | Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Connecticut. |
| Register, | - | 1250 | Mr. Nourse, Pennsylvania. |
| Treasurer, | - | 2000 | Mr. Meredith, Pennsylvania. |

I think your merit would have justified your standing higher in the list, but you are young enough to rise, and I believe you ought to accept the appointment. I am sir, your obedient humble servant,

OLIV. ELLSWORTH.

## FROM JEREMIAH WADSWORTH.

New York, Sept. 9th, 1789.

Dear Sir,

Tho' it may be too late before you receive this, I wish to have your answer at once, as there may be a delay till your answer can arrive. Will you accept the place of Auditor at 1500 dollars per ann. You must move with the national government. It will not be what I wish, but it will be in the way of something better, and I think you may live cheap and snug as you please. I pray you to answer me immediately. I am dear sir, your very humble servt.

JERE. WADSWORTH.

## TO JEREMIAH WADSWORTH.

HARTFORD, Sept. 10th, 1789.

I have received your favour of the 2d, instant. The office of Auditor will not answer the ideas of an appointment which I had contemplated as proper for me. I must therefore decline it, though my objections do not arise from the salary, but from its dependence on another office, and from the nature of the service to be performed. With sentiments of gratitude for your friendly offices, permit me to subscribe myself your most obedt. and humble servant.

## FROM JEREMIAH WADSWORTH.

NEW YORK, Sept. 13th, 1789.

Dear Sir,

You have been nominated by the President as Auditor ; the salary one thousand five hundred dollars a year. I did not like this, as it was my wish and hope you would have been Comptroller. Col. Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, is very anxious you should accept ; thinks you can live here or in Philadelphia as cheap as at home. That is not the case, yet with economy you may, I think, save something, and be in the way of doing better ; but on this too much reliance is not to be placed. When I wrote you last, I hoped a delay till I could hear from you. If you refuse, I think Mr. Burrall will certainly have it, as he has been long in service and expected it. If you accept, there is a great number of meritorious clerks who want employ, and it is my advice that you do not promise any body before you get here, and hear their claims, &c. I shall be glad to hear from you by the post. I am, dear sir, your very humble serv't,

JERE. WADSWORTH.

I had written the above when your letter came to me. I am not sorry you are appointed, though you do not accept. I shall say nothing about your refusal, but let your appointment go forward. Mr. Trumbull and myself both gave our opinions before, that you would not accept, wishing you, as Col. Hamilton wished, to be comptroller.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

NEW YORK, Sept. 13th, 1789.

Sir,

It is with pleasure I am able to inform you, that you have been appointed Auditor in the department of the Treasury. The salary of this office is 1500 dollars. Your friends having expressed a doubt of your acceptance, I cannot forbear saying that I shall be happy to find the doubt has been ill-founded, as from the character I have received of you, I am persuaded you will be an acquisition

to the department. I need scarcely add that your presence here as soon as possible is essential to the progress of business. I am sir, your obedient servant,

ALEXANDER HAMILTON,
*Secretary of the Treasury.*

Oliver Wolcott, Esq.

## FROM OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

New York, Sept. 15th, 1789.

Dear Sir,

You may wish to know what would be the probable expense of your living in this place.

| | |
|---|---|
| House and stable would be about - - - | $200 00 |
| Wood per cord, (best,) - - - - - | 4 00 |
| " " " (oak,) - - - - - | 2 50 |
| Hay, per ton, - - - - - - | 8 00 |

Marketing higher than at Hartford, 25 per cent.

It would not be expected that your office should subject you to more expense of company, or a different style of living, than you would choose. It is my opinion that you could live within 1000 dollars, as your family now is, and that you might expect, on some future occasion, such further advancement as your talents and services will entitle you to. I wish to see you transplanted into the national government for its sake and your own. And am sir, your humble servant,

OLIV. ELLSWORTH.

Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Esq.

## TO MRS. WOLCOTT.

New York, Sept. 24th, 1789.

I have concluded to accept the office of Auditor. On consultation with my friends I think it will be best for us. If we are careful, we may save some property, more than I can expect in Connecticut, and by observation of the principal people in public service, and other respectable families, I am confident that no change in our habits of living will be in any degree necessary. We can live as retired or as much in the world as we choose. In short, I am persuaded that you will feel happy on this account. From the appearance of Col. Hamilton, I think him a very amiable, plain man, and one whom I expect to like on acquaintance. The other officers, except Mr. Eveleigh who is not in town, appear to be good people. The example of the President and his family, will render parade and expense improper and disreputable. What degree of attention to business will be necessary for me to discharge the office well, I cannot determine, but at the worst I believe it will not be more severe than the business I have transacted ; and though the prospect of advancement may be remote, yet in this city there are more chances than in Connecticut. On the whole I can give this as my opinion, that while I remain in the public service, we shall live more agreeably

here than at Hartford; that we *may* save more money; that there are more chances for good and bad fortune, and that from what judgment I can form, I shall not be liable to suffer a disadvantageous comparison with my brother officers in the walks of business. At any rate we must now undertake the risque, if any there be, and by prudence endeavour to guard against any disappointment.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

NEW YORK, Nov. 3d. 1789.

We arrived here after as good a passage as could be expected, and have procured lodgings at Mrs. Grinnell's, No. 27 Queen street, in a good family.

I have not been able to inform myself of the extent of the business in which I am engaged, as Col. Hamilton has been unwell and as Mr. Eveleigh has not arrived. Though the business will be for sometime difficult, it will not be insurmountable, and I trust that I shall be able to discharge my trust with as much reputation as the nature of such an appointment will permit.

What arrangements are in contemplation with respect to the public debt, I have not been able to learn, though I believe from the character and manners of the Secretary, that they will be prudent, sensible and firm.

As soon as I shall have found such acquaintances as will enable me to write letters that convey information of the state of our affairs, I will write fully to you. In the mean time, I am with respect your obedient son.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT SEN.

LITCHFIELD, Nov. 24th, 1789

Sir,

* * * *

Old age is very apt to be vain in giving advice. No one, I believe, of your years requires it less, as you have been long conversant with people of almost every condition, and very readily investigate the principles of human action; yet I will indulge myself once, and which I shall probably never think it necessary to do again, advise you that in every matter of consequence you depend, in the last resort, upon your own judgment rather than upon that of any other. In this mode of conduct you will less frequently err. It will induce a stricter habit of reflection, and if you mistake, you will not feel the mortification of being misguided by such as may have an interest in deceiving you. The executive officers with whom you will have most intercourse will, I believe, be inclined to treat you with generosity and frankness, from the first magistrate downwards. An open unassuming behaviour will be most agreeable to them; this naturally induces confidence and may be done consistently with such reservation as may be necessary. It is generally said that courtiers always act in disguise. This is far from being universally the case, and when it is, it is more generally owing to their situation than choice, especially among those who are to be denominated good men, to which character I truly believe the first magis-

trate, and the heads of the executive departments, all of whom I know, are justly entitled. The habits and manners of a soldier are naturally open and frank, and if at any time it shall seem to be otherwise, such conduct will be rather assumed and politic than otherwise.

Your service will be complicated and arduous, but you will reflect that those who are to judge of your services, will be most capable of making a just estimate of them. You may therefore safely indulge yourself with as much exercise, and relaxation as will be necessary for your health. Endeavour further to preserve the *mens sana in corpore sano* by yielding at times to a certain vacuity of thought. As to your mode of living I need say but very little, your habits of temperance will render it unnecessary.

Thus far I have written, which is much farther than I intended when I began to scribble. You need be under no apprehension that I shall oblige you to read such long letters of advice in future, and will consider this rather as an evidence of my regard for your happiness, than of any anxiety I feel, lest you should be under misapprehension of what principles ought to govern your conduct. With kind regard, yours,

OLIV. WOLCOTT.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT SEN.

NEW YORK Dec. 2d, 1789.

My situation has been so confined in arranging my business, that I have found but few acquaintances, but my condition is not disagreable. There is a chaos of old accounts which must be settled in some way or other; but I think that a great part are in such a state that the accountants will not be pressing, and owing to the deaths and bankruptcies of those who are charged with monies, it is probable that the public will be in no otherwise benefitted, than in being able to say that they have settled their accounts.

The public credit of this country is rapidly rising; securities sell at seven shillings in the pound. This is in some degree owing to the speculations of foreigners. The disorders in France, the declining state of the Dutch republic, and the enormous debts which oppress all the great nations of Europe, are circumstances which give the United States a relative importance, and of which I hope we shall profit.

I cannot however, help considering all that is doing towards the establishment of government, as an experiment of doubtful success. It is certain that the southern states are far less advanced in political science, than the northern, and even there the people have by no means prepared themselves for a steady operation of the general government.

The impost will produce about as much as it was estimated at; some additional revenue will be proposed, probably a system of inland duties on spirits, &c. to be collected on the first sale from the wholesale dealer, by regulations which will not be perceived much in the country. It will probably be also proposed to consolidate the debts of the Union, in the settlement of the state accounts.

This measure though difficult, is I believe necessary, as the states will by excises or otherwise, defeat any general system of revenue which can be proposed, unless this shall be effected.

## FROM JOHN TRUMBULL.[a]

HARTFORD, Dec. 9th, 1789.

I received yours by Dr. Cogswell, who appears a sensible, agreeable young man, and I am glad that he proposes to settle in Hartford. Indeed our circle of friends wants new recruits. Humphreys, Barlow and you are lost to us. Dr. Hopkins has an itch of running away to New York, but I trust his indolence will prevent him. However if you should catch him in your city I desire you to take him up and return him, or scare him so that we may have him again, for which you shall have sixpence reward and all charges. Webster has returned and brought with him a very pretty wife. I wish him success, but I doubt in the present decay of business in our profession, whether his profits will enable him to keep up the style he sets out with. I fear he will breakfast upon Institutes, dine upon Dissertations, and go to bed supperless. I cannot conceive what Barlow is doing. After being eighteen months abroad, you tell me he has got so far as to *see favourable prospects*. If he should not effect something soon, I would advise him to write "the Vision of Barlow," as a sequel to those of Columbus and McFingal.

Pray congratulate Col. Humphreys, in my name, on his late promotion in the diplomatic line. If I understand the matter rightly, he holds the same post which Crispe promised George in the Vicar of Wakefield. You remember Crispe told him there was an embassy talked of from the synod of Pennsylvania to the Chickasaw Indians, and he would use his interest to get him appointed Secretary. Tell him not to be discouraged too much at his want of success. The President has tried him on McGillivray first, and he did not suit the skull of the savage, but we cannot argue from that circumstance that he could not fit as easy as a full bottomed wig upon the fat headed, sot headed and crazy headed sovereigns of Europe. Tell him this story also, for his comfort, and to encourage his hopes of speedy employment. A king being angry with an ambassador, asked him whether his master had no wise men at Court, and was therefore obliged to send him a fool? "Sire," said the other, "my master has many wise men about his court, but he conceived me the most proper ambassador to your majesty." Upon this principle I am in daily expectation of hearing that he is appointed minister plenipo. to George, Louis, or the Stadtholder. For is not his name *Mumps?*

You must know that at this present writing I am confined with this paltry influenza. I kept it for six weeks at the stave's end, as Shakespear's Malvolio did Beelzebub, but it has driven me into close quarters at last. Indeed I could not expect to avoid it, for old Wronghead says it is a Federal disorder, bred out of the new Constitution at New York, and communicated by infection from Congress.

[a] McFingal.

I see the President has returned all fragrant with the odour of incense. It must have given him satisfaction to find that the hearts of the people are united in his favour; but the blunt and acknowledged adulation of our addresses must often have wounded his feelings. We have gone through all the popish grades of worship, at least up to the *Hyperdoulia*. This tour has answered a good political purpose, and in a great measure stilled those who were clamoring about the wages of Congress and the salaries of officers.

I expect something capital with regard to the arrangement of the public debt from the abilities of the gentlemen in the Treasury Department. You will avoid the complicated and embarrassed systems of financiers who affect to be mysterious and artful, and form a plan at once bold, simple and decisive. I almost envy you the friendship of Col. Hamilton, with whom I doubt not, you are in the closest habits of intimacy. However, till I have the honour of a personal acquaintance with him, I will not depose on oath that he is half so great or good a man as I think him.

I perceive I shall repay your correspondence in quantity. Indeed, writing this letter is the only amusement I could have found under this unpleasant indisposition. I am dear sir, with the highest esteem, your friend and humble servant.

JOHN TRUMBULL.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

NEW YORK, Dec. 21st, 1789.

I have received your favour of the 24th November.

* * * *

My health is good, and my situation on the whole rather more eligible than when I was in public service in Connecticut. My business is difficult and exceedingly accumulated, beyond what has been supposed. The affairs of the Treasury were in my opinion not left in a proper condition by the late board of the Treasury. Time and great application will be necessary to reduce them to order, but with the assistance of able clerks, I hope to go through my part of the business. Securities are rapidly rising; perhaps too much expectation has been excited in the public creditors. Something more stable than opinion must eventually support public credit, and no useful experience has yet been acquired, of the inclination or resources of this country to support a public debt.

The State of Pennsylvania will have a new Constitution, and they seem to have adopted the fashionable politics of vesting the powers of government in a single executive, in two houses of assembly and an independent judiciary. The southern gentlemen are growing more federal, but I presume it will appear that the states north of the Potomac, are to pay a great proportion of the public expense.

## TO HIS MOTHER.

New York, Dec. 21, 1789.

* * * The manners of the people here are favourable to the plan which I have in view. Great expense is not required, nor does it add to the reputation of any person. There appears to be great regularity in the city. Honesty is as much in fashion as in Connecticut, and I am persuaded that there is a much greater attention to good morals, than has been supposed in the country. So far as an attention to the Sabbath is a criterion of religion, a comparison between this city and many places in Connecticut, would be in favour of New York. The greatest inconvenience which I shall suffer will arise from being separated from my friends—this I must remedy by keeping up a strict correspondence with them. We have not been able to hire a house, and I shall continue in lodgings till the spring. This mode of living, taking all things into consideration, is best for us at present.

## CHAPTER II.

FIRST CONGRESS—SECOND AND THIRD SESSIONS.

The organization of the Treasury Department, of course occupied a considerable time. The mere arrangement with respect to its modes of transacting business, was in itself no easy task. The machinery by which the financial affairs of the nation are carried on, was to be constructed at once, upon a plan of indefinite expansion, and suited to every object which future exigencies might require. The regulations of the custom houses and loan offices; the modes of providing for the efficient collection and distribution of the revenue, of regulating the accounts of receipts and expenditures, in all of which the easy attainment of complete information at the Treasury, was to be united with the preservation of central and local accountability; the numberless official forms to be used in every branch of business; were now to be prescribed for the first time.

But the department had not even the advantage of starting anew in its operations. The confederacy had left every thing connected with its finance, in a state of almost inextricable confusion, and the affairs of those offices which were transferred to the new Treasury had all to be arranged and stated by the auditor, and finally settled by the comptroller.

The subsequent establishment of the funding system and assumption of the State debts, threw upon them the duty of reviewing, recording and adapting to new forms of alienation, an enormous mass of claims, existing in various

forms, and till then transferable by mere delivery. As the policy of the government matured, and the acts of Congress multiplied, the duties of the executive offices were directed to new objects of attention. Thus the internal revenue, the surveyor's office, military and naval establishments,[a] the mint and purveyor's office were successively organized and regulated.

The modes adopted, which with trivial alterations have since been adhered to, were almost entirely of American origin, and it is believed form, under the conduct of able and honest men, a system the best adapted to its objects which has ever been devised. The Executive arrangement of the Treasury, fell of course upon the subordinate officers, and it reflects no small degree of credit upon them, that it was planned upon so perfect a model. In the performance of those duties which devolved upon him, Wolcott was incessantly and laboriously employed, and all the skill and method acquired under his former tuition were called into requisition.

During the session of 1789, a commencement of a revenue had been made in an act laying a duty on imports. The subject of the finances was resumed when they again met.

The following letter suggests a plan, somewhat similar to that adopted, for an adjustment of the accounts between the general government and the several States.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

NEW YORK, November 29th, 1789.

I believe it will appear from an examination of the acts of Congress, that all the requisitions upon the States for money, contain the following conditions.

1st, That the sums required shall not be considered as the real proportions of the States.

[a] Most of the duties of these establishments, were at first performed by the Treasury.

2d, That the actual payments into the public Treasury shall be credited with an interest at six per cent. per annum, until the period of final adjustment.

3d, That all balances due to or from the several States, on the final adjustment of accounts, shall be equalised by subsequent requisitions of Congress.

It is presumed that no requisitions will in future be made upon the States, and that the payment of past requisitions will not be enforced. The United States will probably provide funds and pay their debts, under regulations to be devised and executed by the authority of the Union, and past experiences of the difficulty and perplexity of adjusting accounts between powerful communities, will prevent them from suffering any law to pass which can possibly occasion a new account to be opened with a State. The object of a settlement with the States is not therefore to find what sums are *due* on the past requisitions; but to ascertain whether some members of the Union have not contributed more than their *proportions*, of the sums actually paid into the public treasury.

It is easy to conceive that all the States may be *debtors* to the United States on the requisitions of Congress, and at the same time, that one, or even twelve of the States may be creditors to each other, or to the United States, in various proportions, for payments made within a given period. As it would be productive of endless contention, for Congress to adjust the accounts in such a manner that some States would be made debtors to other States, and as it is taken for granted that no attempt will be made to equalise old balances by new requisitions, it follows that the particular states must be considered as *creditors* to the United States, for all such sums as they have expended for the common defence, or paid into the general treasury *above their proportions of the aggregate of the sums actually expended or advanced.*

Indeed the terms of the requisitions prove, that the payments by the several States are to be regarded as loans on interest, subject to a deduction by the rule established in the eighth article of the confederation.

The best method for affecting a settlement which I have been able to devise would be this.

To credit the particular States for all payments and advances made by them, according to some liberal and equitable scale, and to consider the whole credits as forming the aggregate of a loan to the United States.

To these credits, all advances from the general treasury, and all debts of the States which may be assumed by the Union, ought to be opposed. The result would be, that balances would appear in favour of each of the States, which would be subject to a charge for their several equitable proportions of the common expense.

To ascertain these proportions will be a work of great difficulty. If the obstacles to undertaking this business are insurmountable, the settlement with the States ought to be abandoned, for an apportionment of the expense is equally necessary to a settlement upon any principle. I conceive that the objections which would be made by the States, to the mode I propose, would be less effectual than to any other, for if the settlements are so made as to occasion debits against the States, their opposition may be successful, as they can refuse to pay, whereas if the settlements are so regulated as to produce credits, which will con-

stitute a part of the public debt, no opposition can be successful which does not produce a subversion of the government.

The more fully to illustrate my ideas, I have stated an account of balances which is founded on a supposition, that the requisition of Congress, of the 22d of November 1777, contains the principles of a just apportionment of the public expense, and that it will appear that the States of Rhode Island, North Carolinia and Georgia, have contributed the smallest sums, in proportion to their ability, compared with the other States, and equal sums in proportion to their ability when compared with each other. In this account balances are stated to be due to the States, but as much uncertainty will arise, both in liquidating the expenditures and ascertaining the proportions of the States, it is probable that no balances will be declared, except in cases where the inequality of the contributions is very apparent, and as those balances will only consist of the excess of actual payments, compared with the rule for ascertaining the ability of the States to pay, there is no reason to expect that any of those balances would be so great as to excite discontent between the States, or inconveniently increase the public debt.

As it cannot be presumed that any State will have occasion for the sums which they have advanced, before it will suit with the convenience of the United States to discharge them ; and as some influence may be derived to the general government, from an interest on the part of the State Legislatures, to support the measures of the Union ; it appears to be expedient that the balances credited to the States should bear interest like other public debt, but that no alienation or transfer should be permitted.

The second session of Congress commenced on the 8th of January, and on the 14th, the Secretary of the Treasury reported the plan for the maintenance of the public credit, upon which was formed the AMERICAN FUNDING SYSTEM. The discussion of this project occupied the greater part of a long and arduous meeting of Congress. The national legislature comprised a large portion of the prominent characters of the country ; the friends and opponents of federal principles were almost equally balanced, and every subject was discussed with direct reference to its bearings on state sovereignty, the great source of the original division of the two parties. A system so well calculated to strengthen and give efficacy to the powers of the general government, naturally called forth the whole weight and force of both.

The most prominent questions which arose upon the plan recommended, were the payment of the whole amount, or the mere market value of the government paper, the dis-

crimination between original and present holders, the assumption of the State debts, and the terms as to the period of payment and rate of interest, of the general debt thus proposed to be established.

The two last were the most ardently controverted. That of assumption in particular, was several times lost or carried, as circumstances favored its opponents or its friends; and finally passed by a majority of two votes only. Its success was in some degree owing to another measure of the session, the change of the seat of government.

The funding of the State debts was supposed materially to benefit the northern states, in which was the active capital of the country; and a more southern residence was considered by some as a countervailing advantage. A compromise having been effected between the advocates of Philadelphia and those of the Potomac, a bill passed fixing the former as the temporary, and the latter as the permanent location, and sufficient votes were thereupon thrown in favor of assumption to make the project a law.

The House during the first Congress, contained under the constitutional ratio, but sixty-five members. How nearly opinion was balanced, may be judged from the vote on this question.

Among other important public measures of this session, may be noticed those directing the enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States; establishing a uniform rule of naturalization; providing the means of intercourse with foreign nations, and for holding treaties and regulating trade and intercourse with the Indians.

The following letters refer to the subjects discussed during the session. The strong declarations of opinion in the letters of the elder Wolcott, respecting the relations which should exist between the general and state governments, will be found curious, as opposed to the views of the delegates from Connecticut in the Federal Convention. It was to the representatives of the small states, and to Sherman

and Ellsworth, perhaps more than to any others, that what of independence in the states was preserved is due.

FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, Dec. 23d, 1789.

Sir,

Your favour of the 2d inst. by Mr. Stanley has been received. The rise of public credit which you mention, is perhaps as good a criterion as can be derived from any one circumstance, of the degree of confidence which is put in the new government. The government will, I believe, have a permanent establishment, although it may perhaps for some time find itself embarrassed by the claims of the local jurisdictions, somewhat similar to what has been experienced from the extensive feudal claims in the early ages of the European Governments. To render the operation of the national government easy, and extensively beneficial, the states must be considered as corporations only, and their laws strictly municipal. If that shall be effected, the arrangement of government may be very happy. To effectuate this, an absorption of the state debts into the national mass might be of much advantage; but this I suspect will not be done till the state creditors shall clearly perceive their advantage in having them placed there, and till the national government shall render the local payments more difficult than they are, by extending their objects of taxation. I sincerely wish it was not in the power of any particular state to do any thing which might affect commerce, and therefore that it was not in their power to enforce any excise whatever. Nothing but the most mistaken policy could induce this state to wish for a continuation of this, as every neighbouring one which shall adopt a similar measure, will derive much profit thereby from the labour of our people, in the same manner as they before did by the impost. Indeed such a general excise as our law contemplates, connected with the national imposts is peculiarly burdensome upon commerce in this state; but as I believe the trading interests are about to combine to oppose it, and as those who have been most in favour of the excise are such men as have always believed that "vox populi, vox est Dei," they will therefore give it up the next session.

The commotions in France will, I apprehend, have a long and extensive operation, and may probably enough involve in their consequences within a few years, a dismemberment of the greater part of the American Continent from the European powers; at the least such will likely be the duration and effect of the civil commotions in Europe, that many people of large property in that country, will wish to deposit their money in the American funds, in case they shall be well established. If this shall so happen, which I cannot consider as an improbable event, money will be loaned upon our funds as low as it is in any part of the universe. This circumstance together with the difficulty to provide for the payment of a large interest on our domestic debt, and the circumstances in which that debt exists in the hands of the creditors, will from principles of justice, prudence and policy, prevent, I apprehend, any plan being adopted at any time

which will provide for the payment of a larger interest than three per cent. Perhaps so large an interest will not at present be either politick or practicable to provide for. But however this is, I hope it will never be judged necessary to pay a higher interest than what I have mentioned upon the domestic debt, and that if more shall be required by the creditors, that it will be in the power of Congress to pay them off. During the administration of Grenville, I think it was, that it was made optionable for the English national creditors to receive three per cent. instead of three and one half, or be paid off; they assented to three per cent. I hope in the course of a few years our funds will be of equal credit. It will be found that if the calculation shall be to raise a fund sufficient to pay six per cent. in specie on the domestick debt, that the greater part of the people of these states will not think it just, but very unreasonable, and will therefore be much dissatisfied with the new government; which might be highly dangerous to its existence. A dissolution of this government would involve in its consequences almost every species of human misery. Yours with much regard.

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

HARTFORD, January 2d, 1790.

Dear Sir,

There has been this week a respectable meeting of the Convention of Merchants at Middletown, who have united in a petition to our legislature for a repeal of the Excise Laws, and if that should not eventually prove successful to forward one to Congress on the subject of commerce, that it may be embraced in one general system. No other political subject engrosses the public attention except the assumption of the state debt. Men of sense, unshackled with office, who are the only ones who speak their opinions till the public opinion is formed, express themselves pleased with the plan. I believe, however, the time is almost past that men of ability will prize personal character above honors. The zeal for the general government does not lessen, and its enemies will not be able to make any ferment about the salaries, either to the prejudice of the government or the individuals who administer it. We all hope that Congress will devise some wise arrangement of the public debt, which perhaps will try the popularity as well as the strength of your new house the most of anything.

You ought to know that the young wiseacre of the treasury quondam, sometimes wags the tongue against you in your absence, and has once more attempted to influence the election of the Lt. Governor, but with as much address as before. He attempted to persuade one of our members of the Merchant Convention that your father was the author of the Excise Law, but was so unfortunate as to address himself to one of them who knew much better, and what was worse for him, knew him also. He is too despicable for resentment.

The election for the council will, from present appearances, be favourable to the best folks in the nomination for new members. Your successor in office appears with dignity in his department; as to your circle of friends, they are as much so as ever, and as much so to one another. We keep up the story of Mr. Trum-

bull's being representative. He is a violent enemy to the Excise, receives at his levee the merchants, drafts warm petitions, attends town meetings, has got a dozen of us appointed trustees of the grammar school, not forgetting the parsons of the city, and of West-Division. With him at our head we are busy in cherishing the interests of the rising generation and piety, which will atone for a large quantity of *invisible sin.*

Instead of a political club we have this winter a lawyers' club; at which we talk away scientifically; and eat and drink voraciously. This letter has proceeded thus far from great to small things, from larger communities to small ones, and now descends down in progression to my own cell, where now is in the main, health, peace and plenty. We are a sober, well regulated family. Accept our love for yourself and Betsey, for we do love you both, and are always your best friends.

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

New York Jan. 10th, 1790.

Congress are now convened, and the accounts from the different parts of the Union are favourable. The accession of North Carolina has blasted the last hopes of the anti-federalists. All that now remains is to arrange our affairs wisely—perhaps nothing very difficult will occur except with respect to the public debt. The ideas on this subject, suggested in your letter, are such as will have great weight. On the rate of interest different opinions will be entertained, it will be fixed at three or four per cent.—probably three per cent will be established, though I believe four per cent. will be recommended, which will be the best proposition to come from the Secretary.

## TO CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

New York Jan. 23d, 1800.

Your favour of the 10th has been received, * * * * I send you as an apology for not writing, and also for your amusement, a copy of the Secretary's report, and as I have no other, I will thank you, when you shall have perused it, to send it under cover to Litchfield.

The general ideas of the system meet with approbation. Some gentlemen suppose three per cent. interest would content the public creditors. The great question will be about the funds, and in case the state debts shall be assumed, it is certain that the objects of revenue will be extended much farther than will be possible under the local arrangements. If the present session shall adopt prudent measures, and those measures shall not be opposed in the country, our government will succeed. We have, in my opinion, arrived at the crisis of affairs; and wish I did not think that there is reason to be concerned for the event.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, Jan. 28, 1790.

Sir,

By accounts Rhode Island will soon adopt the Constitution, which every sensible man in that state ought to wish for, if it was only to give stability to their own local police. When this shall be effected, we may consider the National Government, as I trust, fixed upon an immoveable basis. But what will be its real complexion, will probably depend more upon the conduct of the present session of Congress, than upon the last, or any subsequent one. As I have an entire confidence in the Executive and deliberative branches of government, I have but little doubt but that it will be conducted wisely, and at the same time am well convinced of my own inability to know how so complicated a subject ought to be regulated. This much I will venture a conjecture upon, that the efficiency of this government will essentially depend upon the system of their finances, and the regulation of their militia, both of which therefore, I suppose, they will extend as far as the principles of the Constitution will admit, and consequently endeavour to include ultimately the State debts in the system, and render the militia as dependent as the case will admit, upon the general Executive. The State governments ought most certainly to exist for local purposes, indeed they are the essential principles of the National Government; but let us not from them derive any of the miseries of the old European feudal government. The article relative to the militia is not very clear to my apprehension, but I believe it ought to receive a strict construction for national purposes, as it is the primary principle of national defence, and a more general ground of ambition than any other. I hope at least that no officer will be appointed by popular election, which is not otherwise done, than according to the quantity of grog which is given. I have long been persuaded, that this State has suffered much in every respect by this mode of appointment. I think that the militia should be made as much a national object, as circumstances will admit.

I wish that the Members of Congress may not covet a momentary popularity, instead of doing their duty. They are upon a new and unexperienced piece of business, but they will succeed in it if they do not defeat themselves. Some, at least unless they are different men from what have heretofore attended Congress, will be absolutely governed by all the ignorance and prejudices of their constituents. You will remember that I never re-draft any letters which I write to you; you will therefore regard them only as the momentary effusions of my mind.

Some abstracts of the report of the Secretary of Finance have been published. We shall have the whole I suppose before long. The public have great reason to confide in his abilities. All that any one can possibly possess, cannot be more than will be sufficient to execute so complicated a trust. He will wish to give Congress an opportunity to descant upon the subject of finance, to be better able to judge of what is practicable. Yours with much regard,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

NEW YORK, Feb. 1st, 1790.

I enclosed to Mr. Goodrich last week, a copy of the Secretary's Report on the affairs of the Treasury, with a request that it might be transmitted to you. Lest he may have failed, I now send another copy. The plan meets with as much approbation as could have been expected. Some suppose the rate of interest is too high; others suppose that it is so low that the public creditors will not subscribe; many apprehend that it will tend to a consolidation of the government. On the whole I think the plan will be found to combine as many interests and reconcile as many prejudices, as any that could be devised, and that it will be adopted without any substantial variation.

Congress appears to be going on smoothly; the opposition to the government is diminished, and if the people will in practice submit to what in theory they have admitted to be proper, all will be well.

My situation is as agreeable as possible, considering the unreasonable accumulation of business thrown upon me. If I get through with it, it will operate to my advantage. I am treated very fairly by all the officers of the department, and have been noticed by all the principal gentlemen in the public service. The favours I have received I am very happy to mention to you, as I am certain that they have been bestowed upon me under the auspices of your reputation. I have reason to believe that when we shall keep house by ourselves, you could spend a few weeks here very happily with many gentlemen with whom you have been well acquainted during the war; and I flatter myself that you will be persuaded to accept the invitation.

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

HARTFORD, February 3d, 1790.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter inclosing the Secretary's Report, which I have forwarded to your father. I am much obliged to you for this favour. The report has been reprinted in this town and is sought for with much avidity, but has not been sufficiently read for a public opinion to be formed about it. So far as I can collect the sentiments of your acquaintance, they are favourable to the system. We hope the government will improve the present season of its popularity to establish a more permanent foundation than what it now rests on. Its only stable support will be a well regulated treasury, and I am sure that the best friends of the government will not only be disappointed but dissatisfied, if the present session of Congress passes without a good arrangement of the finances. The public creditors will esteem themselves honourably used, in case the Secretary's ideas be carried into effect; and even if they are not so advantageous, I do not imagine it would occasion any discontent to be regarded. Perhaps without the active influence

of the creditors the government could not have been formed, and any well grounded dissatisfaction on their part will certainly make its movements dull and languid, if not worse. * * * I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend.

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, Feb. 8th, 1790.

Sir,

Your favor of the 1st instant with the report of the Secretary of the Treasury has been received. We were happy to hear that you enjoy health, which I have been much concerned that you would be deprived of, in transacting that farrago of business which has been assigned to you. You have had too much advice to attend to yourself, to need any repetition of it. It must give you much pleasure to be treated with the candor you mention by the gentlemen of the department with which you are specially connected. The gentleman at the head of the department, with whom I am most acquainted, I have always known to be a man of strict integrity and honor. The Comptroller and Treasurer I am a perfect stranger to.

Your kind invitation to visit you after you shall have taken a house, I shall if circumstances admit, gladly accept of, though I think I shall see you here first. Mr. Goodrich sent me the Secretary's Report. I have not had much time to examine it, and consider myself as a very improper judge of the complicated and most relative subject of finance. The Secretary must have given it a very deep reflection, and I think his reasoning upon the impracticability of making any discrimination among the domestic creditors, entirely conclusive. The debt can only be contemplated upon the general principles upon which it exists. It is necessary to do justice as far as possible upon the whole view of the subject; to consider how far taxation can be extended, so as to include a provision for the individual state debts, without being repugnant to their general sense of what is proper, thereby disinclining them to yield these debts to the control of Congress, and to subject themselves to such a taxation for their payment as Congress shall ordain; to provide a pecuniary sinking fund without which the whole system will be liable to be deranged by every accident; to consider whether if our interest shall be raised higher than money is loaned by the Dutch Government it will not, especially as the balance of trade is always against us, (and if the debt shall also be made irredeemable,) in a few years be principally and permanently owned in Europe; and consequently occasion a larger draft of cash from the country than its infant condition will admit. It will also, I imagine, be a matter of much consideration, whether the debt ought not to be founded upon a pecuniary provision alone, and the western territory be made use of occasionally, merely as a sinking fund, as a more unrestrained liberty would be preserved in locating and settling the western country. The future peace and happiness of the United States generally, and the western territory in particular, will much depend in what manner the same shall be settled and governed. By the report I find that the supposed

punctilio of national honour, relative to a literal payment is abandoned as being what the creditors have no right in justice to expect, and what an attention to the essential interests of our country will not admit of. This idea being relinquished, as I believe it ought to be, we ought to consider how this aggregate and heterogeneous debt ought to be treated. National reputation is undoubtedly of the last importance. This must be supported by an apparent and determined effort to do substantial justice ; by an unequivocal punctuality of payment in the manner and time proposed ; by being always in a condition to provide against untoward accidents, and by a firm union among ourselves. But the question still will be, at what rate would you fix the interest ? My own solitary reflections, unassisted by advice, and with but little information, induce me to answer this question. At the lowest rate at which money is loaned to any government in Europe, and independent of any provisional land payment. Nothing prevents our credit from being as good as any of theirs, and our government, I trust, is more secure than any, as I consider the internal commotions in Europe but as just begun. They will, therefore, in a short time induce a deposite, (if that can be supposed to be best) in our funds rather than in their own, and I am fully convinced it will place the domestick debt in as advantageous a situation as the aggregate of the public creditors have any reason, upon the most punctilious principle to expect. It will conduce, as I apprehend, to preserve union and stability among ourselves, and it will not extend the pecuniary provisions beyond the power of the state to make payment and provide for a sinking fund, which I consider as essential to our safety. This interest, I therefore imagine, ought to be either at three or about three per cent.

If the creditors shall not accept of a reasonable provision, which I believe but very few, if any, will decline ; it will be fully in the power of Congress to purchase in stock by their sinking fund sufficient to indemnify them upon such a contingency.

You will present my compliments to Mr. Ellsworth who has been so complaisant as to send me the Secretary of the Treasury's Report. He has asked my opinion upon the subject of it. I had rather, indeed, he should have asked any other service of me. My opinion could be but of little aid to his own. But he is entitled to an acknowledgement of his letter, which I shall take some other opportunity to answer. Yours with the kindest affection,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## TO NATHAN STRONG.

New York, February, 1790.

Congress are proceeding in their deliberations on the Secretary's report. The northern States seem generally to favor the plan. In Virginia and some other states, there is a determined and stubborn opposition. They fear a consolidation of the government ; and also that if their state debts are assumed, all the securities will be purchased by foreigners, and by their neighbors. They say that the system of raising revenues by imposts operates unequally, they being the greatest

consumers; that to remedy this inequality by a land tax, will make such establishments necessary as will render the general government formidable; that though the assumption will be a temporary relief, by causing the revenues to be expended where they are collected, yet in the end it will operate to them like a foreign debt, as they know the disposition of their people will be to sell every thing which will produce money. These arguments have weight upon the principles of the gentlemen who urge them, but the contrary ideas, by being founded upon the most undeniable principles of general policy, will gain ground and obtain a majority in the United States. The worst circumstance attending our affairs, arises from the great variety of prejudices and manners in the United States. If they shall not shortly be assimilated, I fear that disagreeable consequences will ensue.

From the late discussions in Congress, one favorable argument may be drawn, to quiet the fears of those politicians who apprehend danger from the rigid principles of an aristocratical policy. It is certain that a sufficient degree of the tribunitian spirit prevails in the public councils. The same men who warmly advocated the cause of the public creditors, who pressed the states with heavy requisitions for money, and who contended for an efficient government, when Congress had no power, except to discuss propositions, and declare the obligations of morality; now when they are called upon to put in practice the tenets they have maintained, are found to be oppressed with the same fears, which have been the subjects of ridicule and contempt in less respectable characters.

The exemplification of these truths in our leading men, proves your system of philosophy to be well founded, which supposes that men love virtue in the abstract, but hate to exercise it, and that superior information has but little tendency to correct the infirmities of human nature.

I firmly believe that the United States will never appoint more respectable men to posts in Congress, than the present, and yet the observation made by a statesman to his son, is in many instances deplorably verified, "Nescis, mi fili, parva cum sapientia regitur mundus."

## The following letter contains the method of official accounting, devised with reference to the debt.

### TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

NEW YORK, March 1st, 1790.

Sir,

In consequence of the permission which you have given, I take the liberty to suggest a plan for keeping the accounts of the *funded debt*, and for regulating the payment of interest; which I now submit to your consideration.

Let one commissioner be appointed in each state, or in convenient districts of the Union, with instructions to take up and cancel the certificates now in circulation, and to ascertain the interest thereon to the day which may be fixed for commencing business under the new system. For the sums so ascertained by the

commissioners, let credits be passed in their books, and certificates be given, transferable at the office from whence they issued.

Let the several credits on the books of the treasury be examined, and the interest in like manner, and when this is done let a warrant issue to the Commissioner for New York, to credit the sums which may be due to individuals on the settlement of the books of the treasury, in accounts to be opened in his office.

Let a general account of funded debt be opened in the books of the treasury, to be debited with all the sums settled to the credit of individuals by the Commissioners, and to be balanced by accounts to be opened with the books of each commissioner. The old certificates taken up by the commissioners, and the accounts on which the settlements are made, being returned to the treasury, will afford vouchers to support their accounts.

The result of this plan will be, that the *whole amount* of the funded debt will be known from one account, and the amount of credits *to individuals* on the books of each commissioner from the subordinate accounts, and as the interest on the whole debt will commence from one period, the necessary estimates may be made with precision.

As the aggregate sum of the credits to individuals, on the books of each commissioner will be known, the commissioners may be permitted to make transfers of any credits on their books, under such regulations, as may be easily devised—and to facilitate the alienation of stock, transfers from the books of one commissioner to those of another, may be made by warrants from the Secretary of the Treasury. This mode will preserve complete information at the treasury of the state of the accounts, and will afford sufficient data to controul the interest accounts of the commissioners.

To enable the commissioners to keep regular accounts, and discharge the interest punctually, I would propose that the transfer books be closed for fourteen days, before the interest becomes payable—and in that time let the commissioners draw out compleat lists of the credits then existing, on which let them compute the interest which may be due to the several creditors, and prepare the receipts, ready to be signed, as the claimants shall appear.

If the accounts are properly kept, the interest which will appear to be due, will agree with an interest for the like time, computed on the gross amount of each commissioner's credit in the books of the treasury, to cover which interest let one warrant issue to be accounted for in the following manner.

Let the commissioners report a list of all the credits existing on their books, when the transfers are closed in each quarter, and let them transmit monthly statements of the payments which may be made.

To prevent the inconveniences resulting from unsettled accounts and accumulated balances, let the interest books remain in the commissioner's hands only one year after the interest becomes payable ; let them then be transmitted to the treasury ; the receipts unsigned will agree with the balances of cash on hand, for which let the commissioners be debited as funds advanced for the payment of future interest.

Let the interest books remain open at the treasury one other year, and let the balances which then remain unclaimed revert to the public.

This plan will relieve the treasury from many minute details, to the execution of which the offices are not adequate, it will simplify all calculations of the public debt, it will prevent forgeries, it will preserve an effectual check on the expenditure of public money, and will tend to distribute the public debts in proportion to the revenues collected in the different parts of the United States.

These being the great objects to be attended to, in a plan of this nature, I am induced to believe that the leading ideas now suggested, may be usefully adopted. I have the honor to be with the most perfect respect, sir, your obedient servant.

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

HARTFORD, March 23, 1790.

Dear Sir,

I certainly have the most reason to regret your want of leisure to write to your friends; for were it not for that ambition of yours, of doing every thing better than other folks, and more than any body else, I might claim from you to know what wise men think, which I believe cannot always be found out from what they say and do, and also know your own feelings and reflexions, in which I am really more interested than in political systems, or the noisy clamour of Congress. I do not however mean or wish to make our correspondence a burden—write when business, or more necessary relaxation from it does not prevent.

The public mind is more awake to the present measures before Congress, than disposed to censure the past. No spirit of electioneering prevails so far as my information extends; the farmers are well pleased with the high price of corn, &c., and half of them are so great fools as to believe, that the President has ordered Englishmen, French and Algerines, to come and give the high price for which grain is now selling. They wont quarrel I presume, this season, about any thing.

We shall make a strong effort to make Mr. Trumbull deputy, and probably a successful one. I am much obliged by your invitation to visit you in New York, and mean to do it in the course of the summer.

I fear that Mr. Reeve will come to this town, for though I do not care very greatly about it on my own account, I am persuaded that it will be much to his prejudice. The practice of law has become but a small object in this county, compared with what it has been.

Col. Wadsworth gave us a very sensible satisfaction, by the account he has given of the high estimation in which you are held by Mr. Hamilton and the public. I could easily believe it, for I knew you would deserve it. I am, my dear sir, your friend,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

The opinions expressed in the following letter respecting the objects of a funding system, it should be observed,

were widely different from Mr. Hamilton's, and from those which the writer himself afterwards entertained.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

NEW YORK, March 27, 1790.

* * * *

Congress are proceeding slowly, but I hope surely, in their deliberations. A memorial from the Quakers respecting the condition of the Africans, has unfortunately occasioned considerable animation of debate. That business has now subsided without any thing being accomplished.

What system will be adopted with respect to the public debt, cannot be calculated on at this time. Nothing has been done except to pass a few votes, recognising the obligation of the public. The opposition to what has been done proves that great obstacles are yet to be surmounted. Such have been the ill consequences of depreciation, that all the arguments in favor of every opinion are plausible and equivocal.

I can consider a funding system as important, in no other respect than as an engine of government. The only question is what that engine shall be. The influence of a clergy, nobility and armies, are and ought to be out of the question in this country; but unless some active principle of the human mind can be interested in support of the government, no civil establishments can be formed, which will not appear like useless and expensive pageants, and, by their unpopularity weaken the government which they are intended to support. Perhaps the great desideratum is to contrive business to be executed, which shall appear to be important, if it be not so in reality, and at the same time have this business of a kind which shall not depress the spirit, or check the industry of the country. Duties on most of the articles imported, ought to be imposed from political considerations, even though the money were to be buried. If the money is paid in such a manner as to interest the people in the government, and at the same time not corrupt their integrity, the circulation of a revenue answers a good purpose. All taxes answer some good purposes. The propriety of imposing them can be estimated only by the circumstances which attend them.

For these reasons I think the State debts ought to be assumed, as without the assumption the political purposes which I have enumerated, cannot be attained. This will indeed increase the debt of the United States, to a degree which will be very inconvenient. The taxes necessary to pay the interest will be burdensome, and they will appear to be just, only to those who believe that the good attained is more important than the evil which is suffered.

The rate of interest in my opinion ought to be as low as will answer the public expectation, and content the public creditors. On this point the ablest men have expressed different sentiments. The gentlemen from the northern States suppose the rates proposed too high. The southern gentlemen think them too low. The opinions of those who are most accustomed to perform their promises, are perhaps of most weight.

One great evil will at all events attend a funding system ; the debt will be alienated to foreigners, as long as the exchange is against this country. This will take place in the same degree, let the rate of interest be fixed as it may, provided the funds are considered as sure. Foreigners buy for the sake of the annuity, and from a confidence in the resources of the country. The only question which they ask is, what is the value of an annuity for a given sum, payable in America. We cannot check their speculations except by lessening their confidence in our punctuality.

Though I write in this manner I am here no politician. I feel no interest and take no part in any debates. The business in which I am engaged engrosses my attention, and though it is tedious at present, I shall soon reduce it within limits. I have reason to believe, that I have hitherto given satisfaction. The expenses of living here will be greater than I had imagined. I mean however to save something, and indulge the fond, but perhaps vain hope of living in the country.

* * * *

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

HARTFORD, March 28, 1790.

Dear Sir,

* * * *

Before I received your letter, I had placed an implicit kind of confidence in the present plan of finance before Congress, and supposed that it must be founded on sufficient funds. For if that fails, the whole must fail, unless some good Genius shall do better with patching than is commonly the case. I have since attended to it, but without any conversation with any of our politicians. It certainly is defective in this respect, that it does not embrace direct taxes in some way. Perhaps the idea would be unpopular in some parts of the Union ; I believe the good sense of the people would adopt it here, without much complaint. The present popularity of the government is not the principle on which it is to depend, but it is to be used as the means to obtain real power, which is by a system of finance sure, extensive and permanent. Exorbitant taxes are always odious, moderate ones which go to the property of every individual, is perhaps one of the best circumstances of respectability. A man ought to feel the force of government, to reverence it. Without a land tax our wealthiest farmers will pay but little.

External taxation unprotected by a navy, must always be in jeopardy. Nor is it safe to leave the Union without any arrangements for direct, as it will take years to devise the plan, and put it into operation, and public credit will sink when most wanted. The system of finance certainly ought to be a complete whole, and the laws of revenue to embrace the whole circle of the great revenue objects, were it only to have such revenue laws in existence for future use.

Nothing but such a plan can ever link together, and *consolidate* all parts of an unconnected and extensive continent.

But this is like Phormio's prating to Hannibal about war ; and so with our best wishes for yourself and family, that now are and soon will be. I once more subscribe myself your very affectionate friend, C. GOODRICH.

FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, April 23d, 1790.

Sir,

* * * *

I have been happy to learn by a variety of information, that your conduct in your department is very acceptable to the officers of government; this indeed is no more than what I expected. Your zeal in the execution of your office, ought (as probably I too frequently observe to you,) to be consistent with a proper attention to your health, and I am glad to know that you expect to have it reduced to a less oppressive condition. The superintending a business which requires fifteen clerks to execute, must be extremely arduous.

Your observations respecting the public debts as essential to the existence of the national government, are undoubtedly just,—there certainly cannot at present exist any other cement. The assumption of the State debts is as necessary, and indeed more so, for the existence of the national government, than those of any other description; if the state governments are to provide for their payment, these creditors will for ever oppose all national provisions, as being inconsistent with their interest which; circumstances, together with the habits and pride of the local jurisdictions, will render the states very refractory. A rejection to provide for the State debts, which it seems has been done by a committee of Congress, if persisted in, I consider as an overthrow of the national government. I perceive an idea has been given out, that all national pecuniary provisions can be made which are necessary, even including the State debts, without a direct taxation. I think, with all my ignorance of the subject, that it would be very strange if it could be effected without a land tax, but if it can, I hope it will never be attempted, for unless there shall be a direct taxation which shall affect every man of property, the people in general in this country will not have the least apprehension of the existence of a national government, and consequently have no regard for it A direct taxation (as odd as it may seem,) is essentially necessary to induce a people to love their government.

Besides, if this mode of tax is not introduced upon the first establishment of government, and with the influence of all the public creditors, it is not likely it can be hereafter adopted, but with the greatest public disturbance. I should think that the general government would be looking forward to the establishment of a navy, to give themselves respectability, protection, and to preserve the peace of the States. I wish myself that Congress would prefer the white people of this country to the blacks. After they have taken care of the former, they may amuse themselves with the other people. The African trade is a scandalous one; but let us take care of ourselves first. * * * * Yours,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

New York, April 14th, 1790.

The question of assuming the state debts has been taken in committee of the whole, and lost by a majority of two votes. The question will be revived, as it is of too much importance to be lost finally, if it shall be possible to carry it.

I much fear that the various opinions with respect to the public debt will not soon be reconciled, and that the popularity of the government will be diminished by what shall be adopted. If the Southern states were prepared for the operation of systematic measures, all would be well; this is far from being the case; many very respectable characters entertain political opinions which would be with us thought very whimsical, and the general complexion of their sentiments can be but ill reconciled with the plans which have been proposed.

* * * *

New York, May 8th, 1790.

* * * *

Congress go on with more zeal than usual in business, and begin to make progress. They will probably adopt the principles of the Secretary's report, except with respect to the state debts. Whether they are to be assumed, will depend on the verdict of public opinion, which will I think, be finally in favour of the measure.

The affairs of this country are so generally prosperous, that public management must be very bad to render the people very unhappy. It seems as though all the events in Europe were concurring for the benefit of America. By the last vessel from France, we learn that Mr. Necker had stated a deficiency in the revenue of this year of nearly three hundred million livres; that the national assembly had begun to emit paper money, and that all public measures indicated the weakness, folly and turbulence of the democratical government. It is said that, such is the prevalence of the new ideas, that there is little prospect of a re-establishment of the government; the nobility, clergy and army are destroyed, and the name and figure of an "aristocrat" renders a man's life unsafe. Perhaps some of these stories are magnified, but there remains no doubt that the affairs of the nation are ruined for some time.

In consequence of the bill of rights agreed to by the national assembly, an association has been formed for settling a colony in the western country of the United States. About one hundred Frenchmen have arrived with the national cockade in their hats, fully convinced that it is one of their natural rights to go into the woods of America and cut down trees for a living. I believe that my friend Barlow has been the principal agent in forming this association, and if it shall prove successful, it will be a great event and profitable for him.

New York, May 22d, 1790.

Congress are debating a bill for funding the public debt, exclusive of the state debts, of which I despair of a settlement. There is, however, a strong current to be opposed, and the success of any measures may be considered as dubious. I am not certain that the gentlemen who embarrass this subject, are not as honest men as those who are endeavouring to establish some system. The truth is, that the government of most of the states were so entirely prostrated at several periods during the war, that it is impossible to arrive at any considerable certainty in adjusting the mutual claims of the states. It is also the case that desultory regulations, and knavish and weak persons who have been empowered to establish debts against the public, have increased our burdens very improperly. The avidity of speculators has also excited a resentment which, though not strictly rational, is in a great degree excusable.

These circumstances create different sentiments, both with respect to the justice of the debt and the obligations of government to discharge it, and as a political tie of union the arguments which recommend a funding system to one party disgrace it in the opinions of the other.

The people of this country do not appear to me to harmonize in sentiment on governmental subjects; they have the same general interests, but when the details of systems are examined, and the operation of particular laws discussed, almost insuperable difficulties are presented.

The President has been exceedingly unwell; had the fears of those acquainted with his situation been verified, the consequences would have been alarming. What is most wanted here is stability and political knowledge. There are men of great abilities and of extensive science; but they are in some instances prone to indulge their minds in fanciful theories of republican liberty. Some few mistake cunning for wisdom.

The office which I hold is the most burdensome under the government, but I shall execute it in the best manner which I can. What degree of success I may expect, is entirely uncertain.

## TO HIS MOTHER.

New York, May 31, 1790

* * * *

We are now conveniently situated in a very healthy and convenient part of the town, and expect to live more at ease than we have done, and shall be happy to see such of our friends as will visit us. From my brother we have received a promise which we expect he will shortly fulfil with good faith. I have nothing new to inform you, not even in the world of politics, of which you can wish to be informed, except that the House of Representatives have this day resolved to remove to Philadelphia. This event is indifferent to me, except as it will require me to remove farther from my friends. It cannot, however, be a matter of great

consequence even in this respect, as I can hear from them as frequently as at this place, and whenever I can visit them at all, the difference of the journey will not be considerable. I often think of you and my friends, and regret that my fortune in life compels me to live from them—a hope, which is perhaps vain, is frequently indulged that some incident will enable me to return, with a prospect of business which will support me. In all events, it will be my constant prayer that you and they may live in health and prosperity.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

JULY 4th, 1790.

* * * *

With respect to public business in the country, I can form no definite calculation. Congress are still disputing whether they shall fund the debt. The assumption of the state debts this session is an improbable event. Direct taxes are the political abhorrence of the day, and I believe that a majority cannot be induced to vote for anything resembling an excise. Thus, it seems, all the revenues are expected to be derived from duties on importations. * * *

I wish it was in my power to give you a pleasing account of the state of our public affairs. Nothing is yet done, nor can I determine from the votes in Congress what any one wishes or expects to do. The question respecting the state debts is not given up. Continual negociations are making with regard to it. The question of residence is also continually entangling every measure which is proposed, and a party which is gained by one proposition, is frequently lost by the resentment which another party can excite by bringing up some other question.

There are in Congress all the varieties of opinion that can be imagined. Some believe that the public debt has qualities that are most sacred. These insist that nothing shall be done which does not imply the greatest veneration for the public creditors; others imagine that their claims are principally founded in accident or fraud, and wish to disavow the obligations of the late government. In the mean between these two extremes, the truth probably lies; and if anything is completed, the result will be a proposal for a new loan of the public debt, at about four per cent. interest With respect to residence, I think we shall finally settle in Philadelphia, where the consequences stated in your letter will be perceived. Some indications of a spirit too imperious have appeared. Indeed, all the disputes of this session may, in my opinion, be traced to the rival claims for pre-eminence between Massachusetts and Virginia, New York and Pennsylvania. These states have very important interests at stake, which cannot easily be reconciled, and the consciousness which they have of their weight in the government, prevents them from exercising all the moderation which our present circumstances require.

## TO FREDERICK WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, July 20, 1790.

* * * *

The comptroller is unable to attend constantly to the business of his office, which renders my attention somewhat more necessary.

It is not strange that the people of the country should feel disappointment at the delays of Congress. You may, however, be assured that a great majority are honestly attempting to serve the public. They disagree, it is true, as to the manner in which this is to be effected, and this is to be imputed, in a great measure, to the real difficulties which attend the subjects of their deliberation.

The business of the residence is settled. We are to remove before the 1st of December to Philadelphia, and if we live so long, in ten years, to the Indian place with the long name on the Potowmac.[a]

The great question is now respecting the interest. Our friend, Mr. Ellsworth, in the Senate, has been of opinion that it was not expedient to attempt to fund the public debt at a higher rate of interest than four per cent. That this sum, punctually paid, would answer the expectations of the creditors, the requirements of justice, and would better secure the public honor than a promise of a higher provision, which would, under the circumstances of this country, be attended with greater risque of failure.

He has also been dissatisfied with the Secretary's proposal of leaving one-third of the debt unfunded for ten years, as this measure would tend to encourage speculations, and would leave, after ten years, a great burden upon the country, with little advantage to the creditors, who would probably alienate their demands to foreigners, who would purchase that part of the debt at a low rate.

These opinions have been supported by him with all that boldness and reason which give him a predominant influence in the Senate. He has, however, been warmly opposed, and a compromise, it is said, has been made to fund the principal of the domestic debt in the following manner:

For every $100 principal, 66 2-3 to be funded presently at 6 per cent., and 26 88-100 after ten years at the same rate. The indents and all arrearages of interest, which amount to about one-third of the debt, to be funded at three per cent. This, it is said, will give about 4s. 3 per cent. interest for the entire debt.

A resolution has passed the Senate for funding the state debts at the same rate as the continental debt; but all these things may, and probably will assume a different modification before the session is completed.

The House have passed an additional impost act, by which the duties are increased about 33 1-3 per cent. This has not yet passed the Senate.

These are the principal matters of which I am able to inform you at this time, as the post will leave the town directly. * * * *

[a] Conococheague.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

New York, July 27th, 1790.

Yesterday, the question for assuming the state debts was carried in the House by a majority of six votes. Both Houses having agreed on this question, it will probably be carried into effect.

No bill for ways and means has been settled; the House have passed a bill for extending the impost. It is said that some considerable alterations will be made in the Senate. If they should propose what has been called an excise, a long debate will probably ensue, and if they agree to the bill of the House, they risk much upon the pacific temper of the merchants and the vigilance of public officers. I think it is unfortunate that they have so limited themselves with respect to a revenue system.

The House have disagreed to the amendments of the Senate to the funding bill, by raising interest to four per cent., and engaging to fund the full remaining third of the principal of the debt after seven years, instead of ten years, as was proposed by the Senate. On this question, the Senate have not yet decided. The system for funding the public debt is, in my opinion, too intricate, and the part which is to be funded, at a future time, will nourish improper speculations, perpetuate the ideas of depreciation, and will be transferred to foreigners at a low value. The country will be charged with a heavy debt, and will receive but a small consideration. * * *

## TO MRS. WOLCOTT.

New York, July 29th, 1790.

I am here in the old way, as grave, though I hope not quite so whimsical as a bachelor. Our good neighbours and Mr. Langdon have much sport at my expense, which I would not mention except that, in my opinion, their jokes afford an indirect compliment to me and you as good people who have an affection for each other. I shall come and see you as soon as possible, though the precise time is uncertain. Mr. Eveleigh has been very unwell; he will be obliged to go into the country for the recovery of his health, and this renders my attention here rather more necessary than usual.

Tell all friends who enquire about politics, that the Congress begin to proceed with success; that they have assumed the state debts, and done a variety of good things to pacify the people who censure them. You must also make apologies to all of them for my negligence in writing, and mention your reasons for believing that I remember them with sincere affection.

New York, August 8th, 1790.

Another motion has been made in Congress for continuing in this city. It has failed, so that our removal may be considered as certain. If I can gain a good

opportunity, I shall go to Philadelphia for the purpose of engaging a house. I am not pleased with this plan of removing, especially as it will occasion an expense which I cannot well support. I mean to live with as much economy as possible, and if, after all, I get into gaol, I shall expect Congress will redeem me. At any rate, I will not feel anxiety with respect to matters which I cannot control.

It is expected that Congress will adjourn on Tuesday or Wednesday, at which time I will write you again. Mr. Eveleigh has gone to New Lebanon Springs for his health. This renders it difficult for me to set any precise time to come and see you. You need not feel any concern on my account; my health is very good, and the business which has been most fatiguing to me is completed. I live the life of a sober bachelor, and the servants are very regular and attentive. All is as well as can be while you are absent, and the thoughts which I indulge of the happiness you enjoy with our friends render me tolerably contented.

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On the eleventh of August, Congress adjourned to meet at Philadelphia on the first Monday of December.

As an account of the financial history of the country during a subsequent period will form a part of this work, it will be deemed necessary to state briefly, in passing, the principal features of Mr. Hamilton's administration.

The funding system, the leading measure of this session, was, in fact, the basis of all that followed; and to effect its object in the payment of the national debt, many of the others were chiefly intended as means. Of the origin of that debt, of the reasons for giving it the form which it now received, and the arguments advanced by its author and advocates in their support, it would, of course, be improper here to speak; but a sketch of the plan on which the debt was consolidated, and put in a condition to be discharged, is essential for the purpose of future reference.

The act passed in consequence of Hamilton's recommendations, differed in many of its details from the system as proposed by him, but in its general outline was the same. It is sufficient to notice that actually adopted.

The debt of the United States, collectively, was, at this time, distinguishable into two kinds—the foreign and domestic debt.

The foreign debt consisted of

| | |
|---|---|
| Principal, bearing an interest of 4 and 5 per cent | $10,070,307 00 |
| Arrears of interest to Dec. 31, 1789, | 1,640,071 62 |
| | $11,710,378 62 |

The domestic debt was subdivided into liquidated and unliquidated, principal and interest:

| | |
|---|---|
| Principal of the liquidated, bearing 6 per cent. interest, | $27,383,917 74 |
| Arrears of interest to Dec. 31, 1790, | 13,030,168 20 |
| | 40,414,085 94 |
| Unliquidated, estimated at | 2,000,000 00 |
| Making in all | $54,124,464 56 |

The debts of the individual states were moreover estimated, principal and interest, at about $25,000,000 00

The mode adopted in the act for systematizing the whole was as follows:

The *foreign debt* was, at all events, to be paid according to its terms, and provision was made, in the first place, by appropriating the revenue derived from foreign duties on imported goods, and on the tonnage of vessels, to the payment of interest and principal; six hundred thousand dollars per annum being first deducted for the support of government. The President was likewise authorised to borrow a sum not exceeding $12,000,000, reimbursable in 15 years, to pay off the arrears of interest and the instalments already due, and if the change could be made on advantageous terms, to pay off the principal.

The domestic debt of the Union and the state debts were *funded*. The former existed in various shapes. To provide for it, a loan was authorized to be opened at the treasury and at loan offices established in each state, for its full amount. Subscriptions to this loan were receivable in the evidences both of the principal and of the interest of the old debt at par, and in continental money, at the rate of one hundred dollars in bills to one in specie. Subscribers of the *principal* received two-thirds of the amount in six per cent.

stock, bearing a present interest; and to induce creditors to subscribe by rendering this stock a desirable investment in point of permanency, the government were not to pay more than two per cent. per annum on account of the principal. For the remaining third, six per cent. stock was also issued, but the interest was not to commence until after the year 1800. Subscribers on account of arrears of *interest* received certificates of three per cent. stock to the whole amount, redeemable at any time. Non-subscribing were allowed the same interest as subscribing creditors for the year 1791, on renewing and liquidating their certificates to specie value.

The debts of the individual states were assumed and funded in this wise:

A third loan was authorised of $21,500,000, the amount assumed, receivable in the principal and interest of the certificates or notes issued *by the states* for general or particular defence, prior to January 1st, 1790. This gross amount was apportioned among the states, and it was provided that in case of an excess being subscribed over the ratio of any one state, that a proportionate allowance only be made. The interest to the end of 1791 was to become principal. The stock issued for the debts thus assumed, bore interest in a manner somewhat different from that of the domestic debt. Four-ninths bore six per cent. interest, to commence with the year 1792, one-third three per cent., and the balance, two-ninths, bore six per cent. after 1800. Where the whole amount to which a state was entitled, was not subscribed, interest on the balance was paid to the state in trust for the creditors. Each state was made indebted to the United States for the amount subscribed and the sums thus paid.

The sums derived from the revenue laws and remaining after the before mentioned appropriation, were pledged for the payment of interest on the stocks thus created. The faith of the United States was likewise pledged to provide

further revenues if necessary, and the proceeds of the public lands were devoted to the discharge of the principal of this debt.

The gross amounts of the several kinds of debt as thus constituted, ultimately differed somewhat from the original estimates. The amount existing on the 1st of January, 1791, was generally adopted by the federalists as the basis of calculation, and will be hereafter given.

It yet remained to settle the accounts between the United States and the respective states, in order to equalize their expenditures during the war. By a subsequent act of this session, three commissioners were appointed to examine the claims exhibited and determine on those accrued for general or particular defence. They were to debit the states with advances made to them and interest thereon to the beginning of the year 1790, and to credit them with disbursements and advances, with interest to the same period, and, having struck a balance, to apportion the aggregate of all the balances. The difference between the apportionments and the respective balances to be carried in a new account to their debit or credit, as the case might be. This apportionment was to be made according to the ratio of representation as ascertained by the first census. The states having balances to their credit were entitled to have them funded in the same manner as the rest of the domestic debt.

The national debt having thus obtained a tangible form, measures were brought forward to provide for its payment; they were, of course, progressive, and some years elapsed before the system was completed. Congress, at the first session, had commenced by laying duties on imports, and new acts were passed at the present, imposing a duty on the tonnage of vessels; altering and extending the objects of the former duties, and providing for their more efficient collection. As it was desirable that the burden of the debt should be removed within the time to which the mere

reimbursements, at the rate of two per cent. per annum, would extend it, the nucleus of a sinking fund was created by the appropriation of the revenue for the current year, after deducting previous appropriations, to its purchase at its then low value. The purchases were to be made under the direction of the President of the Senate, the Chief Justice, the Secretaries of State and of the Treasury and the Attorney General, acting with the assent of the President. The President was also authorized to borrow $2,000,000 for the same purpose, and the interest accruing on the stock which should be thus bought in, was to be applied to repay the loan. The proceeds of the public lands when sold, had before been pledged to the discharge of the debt.

The measures for the restoration of public credit thus commenced, had the most happy effect upon the country. Increased confidence in the resources and good faith of the nation begot increased activity, and its consequent effects were seen every where, in the revival of agriculture and commerce; general prosperity bid fair soon to succeed the apathy and depression which existed under the confederacy.

The foreign relations of the United States at this time, it may be mentioned, were on the contrary far from satisfactory. France and Holland were the only nations with which a favorable state of affairs existed. Great Britain had no minister in this country, and, since the return of Mr. Adams, none had been appointed to that court from the United States. During this summer, some informal attempts were made, but fruitlessly, by Mr. Morris, who was commissioned as agent for that purpose, to arrange the difficulties arising out of the non-execution of the treaty of peace. Mr. Carmichael had been sent, in April, as chargé to Spain; but his efforts to adjust the points of controversy with that country, respecting the boundary and the navigation of the Mississippi, were attended with

the like fate. A treaty with the Creek nation of Indians was effected by Col. Willett—an object heretofore defeated by the authorities of the adjoining Spanish colonies. Attempts made to effect a similar one with the tribes north of the Ohio failed, as it was supposed, through the influence of the British, and an expedition against them, under Gen. Harmar, met with a defeat.

### TO MRS. WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, August 26th, 1790.

I find it but a dull business to live alone, especially since Congress have adjourned. The difference which this, and the removals of the citizens into the country has made in the appearance of the city, is much greater than I could have imagined. I have heard or seen, I know not which, the advice which you sent to Miss M. and Miss W., to inform you how I behave. Miss M. has gone into the country and Miss W. cannot give you much information. I know more than both of them respecting the matter, and if I did not fear that this letter would fail of a direct conveyance, would give you a history of all my proceedings. In general I have behaved well, but to enumerate my good actions would savour of vanity, for which reason I am prevented from affording a great part of the history of my conduct; I do not think that what has been amiss ought to be published to the world, which is as good a reason why the remaining part ought not to be committed to writing.

As I know you cannot have done any thing which is not praiseworthy, and as the ladies are permitted by custom to compliment themselves, it will be perfectly proper, and will be a satisfaction to me to know how *you* have behaved, which I doubt not you will be good enough to inform me. I suppose the reason that I have not heard from Litchfield, has been that my friends supposed me to be from the city. It is a sore disappointment that I have not, but Mr. Eveleigh's sickness, and the labour necessary to prepare to execute the acts passed the last session have absolutely prevented. At no future period will my business be so burdensome as it has been, and in one or two years it will be easy. The business of the loan office, mentioned by you, is not worth accepting, it will be burdensome and the expenses will for some time consume the whole salary. Besides, Mr. Imlay's claims were such that it would have been dishonourable to have attempted to interfere with them.

### TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

NEW YORK, Sept. 6th, 1790.

I have for some time been anxiously expecting to proceed on a journey to my friends; but the absence and sickness of the comptroller, and the indispensable

necessity of making the necessary arrangements for executing the funding system have hitherto prevented. I have been to Philadelphia to procure a house, and have succeeded, though with some difficulty. I am to pay the excessive rent of one hundred pounds, which if known would probably divert some of the envy which my old acquaintances feel on account of the "high salary" which is given me. The Philadelphians tell me to keep up my spirits, that rents will be lower. I believe they will be so in another year, but the expenses of living and removing, will for this year exhaust my earnings.

The revenue of this country under the old act has answered the most sanguine expectations. I hope no disappointment will happen with respect to the new system. The funding bill is by far more complex than it ought to be in my opinion, but the inconveniences will in a great measure rest upon the executive officers of the revenue department whose labours will be greatly increased.[a]

* * * *

## TO MRS. WOLCOTT.

New York, Sept. 7th, 1790.

I have at length been to Philadelphia, and with much difficulty have procured a house in Third Street, which is a reputable part of the city. The rent is one hundred pounds, which is excessive, being near double what would have been exacted before the question of residence was determined. If the rent was more reasonable I should be contented for the ensuing year, after which a better choice and lower rents are to be expected.

Philadelphia is a large and elegant city. It did not however, strike me with all the astonishment which the citizens predicted. Like the rest of mankind the Philadelphians judge favourably of their city and themselves, and their representations are to be admitted with some deductions.

You know all the important business of the last session remained unfinished until the last days—among others the funding bill of which so much has been said. This bill is to take effect on the first day of October, and all the plans and arrangements for executing the system must be made in season. These regulations are of the utmost importance to the public, and the reputation of all concerned in framing them is interested in them. On account of the absence of the Comptroller, considerable business of this nature has devolved on me, and though I wish much to see you and the little boy, yet I cannot at this time be spared without injury to the public business and missing an opportunity favourable to my views.

[a] This system, as has been mentioned in the text, was altered in the law from Mr. Hamilton's plan, and lost much of its simplicity.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

NEW YORK, Sept. 14th, 1790.

* * * *

We have no news, the country is, I believe, pretty quiet. Some contentions respecting the new elections exist, but they are matters of course. It will be several years before we shall know certainly, whether the new constitution will answer the purpose. I think it will, as measures have succeeded hitherto according to the most sanguine expectations of its best friends. We want men of political experience in Congress, and to administer the government, but where the general affairs of society are prosperous, it must be a very bad administration which overturns a government.

NEW YORK, Sept. 21st, 1790.

* * * *

I have no special news to communicate except that a story prevails here, and is credited, that Spain has relinquished the right of navigation of the Mississippi to the United States. If this is true, we shall soon receive notice of it from the President.

There seems to be no certainty with respect to the negociations between Spain and Great Britain. It has ever been my opinion that the dispute would be settled amicably.

The rage for abolishing monarchy is extending through Europe. Late accounts from Hungary inform us that violent commotions prevail in that kingdom. If the French do not carry their innovations too far, it is probable that there will be a general revolution in favour of liberty in most of the European governments.

The present time is one when the greatest complaints are to be expected against the government of this country, as the new elections are approaching; notwithstanding which, no alarming uneasiness appears to prevail. The Northern States are somewhat unhappy with respect to high salaries and pensions, the middle states are vexed at the assumption of the state debts, and the southern planters are execrating the politics of the Quakers. These things will not however much effect the government.

Pennsylvania has just begun to discuss the merits of the candidates for the important office of governor. Either Gen. Mifflin or Gen. St. Clair will succeed. Much abuse and recrimination has happened. From what little I have heard and seen, the merits of the candidates are pretty equal and the language of faction with respect to both is probably more just than commonly happens on such occasions.

TO MRS. WOLCOTT.

New York, Oct. 3d, 1790.

* * * *

I live here exactly like an owl, in one month more I should become one, indeed I would not live such another month as the last for any thing which I can expect to obtain by common fortune. My health though not confirmed is mending. I take the bark and bathe every morning, by which you will know that I am recovering. I have sent off a part of my office papers and furniture; and have got our glasses packed and cases made for the other furniture, the rest of the business can be done in a short time when I am otherwise ready.

You can hardly conceive the plague which it is to move the offices in a proper manner. I shall however have that business principally done by the clerks.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, Nov. 24, 1790.

I have the pleasure to inform you that we have safely arrived in this city. I have yet seen but little of it, but trust that I shall grow reconciled to my situation. The expenses of living will not be quite so great as I expected, though I shall not be able to save much, if any thing from my salary. The house which I live in is a very good one, and in a very airy and reputable part of the city.

The country is generally very quiet. Virginia has voted that the assumption of the State debts was unconstitutional; but I have been informed that they have refused to provide funds for their own debt, therefore their creditors must soon subscribe. It is fortunate that there can be no successful opposition to this measure, without an open rebellion against the laws. The opinion of the legislature is not of much importance.

If the general government get money, all will go on well. A short time will now put the government to a trial of its efficiency. * * *

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Congress, pursuant to adjournment, met again on the first Monday of December, at the city of Philadelphia; the business of the most urgent importance was an additional provision for the support of public credit, resolutions passed at the last session, had required of the Secretary further plans for this object, and they were now furnished.

At the close of the year 1790, there was a considerable surplus of revenue beyond the objects of expenditure, which had required a provision for that period, no interest being payable on the funded debt during this year, and the

amount had been applied under the act of the last session to the purchase of debts.

Sufficient provision already existed for the payment of interest on the foreign debt, and for the chief part of that on the old domestic debt. Additional revenue was now required for the deficiency in this latter, and for the interest on the assumed debt, which would commence with the year 1792. For this purpose the Secretary recommended a further duty on foreign distilled spirits, and a new duty on those of domestic manufacture. A bill founded upon the recommendations of this report, was accordingly introduced, and though strongly opposed by the southern and western members, which latter represented the districts most affected by it, at length became a law.

Having thus obtained the means of discharging the national obligations, it remained to devise the most proper and efficient mode of applying them to the contemplated object. As the best instrument for the collection of the import duties, and for the safe keeping and transmission of the public monies, the Secretary recommended a National Bank, and submitted a plan for its establishment. In February an act was passed in accordance with his report incorporating the BANK OF THE UNITED STATES.

The charter of this institution was limited to twenty years. The capital was $10,000,000, of which $2,000,000 were subscribed on behalf of the government, and it was restricted to six per cent. interest on its loans. The subscriptions of individuals were payable, one fourth in gold and silver, and three-fourths in the six per cent. stocks, bearing a present interest, or in three per cents., at one half their nominal value.

The subscription on the part of the government was to be paid out of monies borrowed under previous acts, the government borrowing again the full amount from the bank, to be reimbursed in ten annual instalments with interest.

No future loans exceeding one hundred thousand dol-

lars, were to be made to the United States, except by authority of law. The bank was authorized to establish offices of discount and deposit in the several States, and its notes were made receivable in payment of dues to the government. It was authorised to sell the stock of the United States, but not to become a purchaser.

The creation of a national bank marked, in the opinion of Judge Marshall, an era in the organization of our political sects. The lapse of half a century has since seen the same institution more than once a monument of their contests, alternately re-created and destroyed by its first enemies; and the question is not yet settled whether men or principles have changed.

Another measure recommended by Mr. Hamilton, was the establishment of a MINT, and the creation of a national currency. The subject was discussed at length in all its bearings, and the project of the office, as well as the number and value of the coins suggested. The length of the debates on the subjects above-mentioned, prevented any further action on this than the passage of a joint resolution towards the end of the session, ordering the mint to be established, under such regulations as should be thereafter directed by law, and authorizing the President in the meantime to engage the principal artist, and procure the necessary apparatus.

Among the more important acts, were the admission into the Union, of the new States of Kentucky and Vermont; the former to take effect in June, 1792, the latter in March, 1791. Each state was allowed two representatives until the next apportionment.

An additional regiment of infantry was ordered to be raised, and future provision made for the protection of the frontiers, in consequence of the defeat of Gen. Harmar.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 1, 1791.

* * * *

Congress appear to be in good humour, and are proceeding to complete the fiscal arrangements of the country, which will doubtless be substantially such as are proposed by the Secretary of the Treasury. The credit of this country is rising at home and abroad, and so far as I hear, there prevails a general sentiment that our affairs are in a prosperous way.

I have not yet made many acquaintances in this city; the manners of the people here are more reserved than in New York. I shall not however want a sufficiently respectable and extensive society of friends. In point of compensation for services, I have the vanity to think myself not placed upon a proper scale. If it shall be the opinion of others, this matter will be redressed. At any rate, I can live on less than most of my comrades in business, and therefore may safely calculate that their wants will not be inconsistent with my interests.

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PHILADELPHIA, February 12, 1791.

* * * *

A bill for imposing duties on ardent spirits imported, and distilled in this country, is almost settled. Its operation in the northern States will not be perceived to be different from that of the act for collecting the customs. A few additional officers to watch the distilleries, will be all that are created by the act, except one general inspector for each State, whom the President is authorized to appoint from the officers of the customs, in cases where it shall be judged expedient. In the appointment of the inspectors for the States, the appointments are to be made with the consent of the Senate; the sub-inspectors, and the limits within which they are to operate, will be designated and defined by the President. The bank bill has been closed, and has been formed according to the plan suggested by the Secretary of the Treasury.

I think that no new business of consequence will be attempted the present session.

The indications of the public sentiment with respect to the new government, are very equivocal. The northern States, and the commercial and monied people, are zealously attached to it. The state executives and officers cannot be considered as good friends; many of them are designing enemies.

This State, though very officious in obtruding their opinions, will have but little influence. The power and respectability which persons not acquainted with with their affairs attribute to them, is ideal. A great portion of the members are ignorant men; they are collected from all nations under heaven; many have smarted under the scourges of European tyranny, and act under the influences of old prejudices and habits, though their present condition is entirely different from any which they formerly experienced. Zeal for liberty, the principles of which they do not understand, and envy of abilities and industry which they cannot

emulate, induce them to raise objections to every measure of government. If they were a compact, uniform body of people, governed by the same passions and sympathies, and had their present disposition to advise, they would be formidable; but the desultory projects of Quakers, Tories, anti-feds, Germans and Irishmen, who mutually despise and hate each other, will be insufficient to overcome the great and substantial influence of property and reason in this State.

I am unable to form any opinion as to the real condition of the southern States. Were the representatives of the northern country to express the same sentiments, and oppose the projects of government with the same vehemence, I should imagine that the people were on the eve of a rebellion. But this is so far from being the case, that there is every reason to believe, that the revenue is as punctually collected there as in any part of the United States.

The new act which they call an excise will put them upon their mettle, as a considerable number of officers will be necessary to operate all over the country. It is said that there are over three thousand small distilleries in Pennsylvania only; they equally abound in Virginia and Carolina. * * *

PHILADELPHIA, March 5, 1791.

I have delayed to answer your letter till this time, as the revenue bill was unsettled, and as it was uncertain what arrangements would be made respecting the collection.

The bill has passed, with a provision that one supervisor of the revenue shall be appointed in each State, with such a number of inspectors as the President shall judge necessary.

The business of the session has ended tolerably well; some arrangement which is partly secret, has been made with respect to an Indian expedition, which is to be commenced by General St. Clair.

Doctor Johnson has resigned his seat in the Senate, as the office was inconsistent with that of President of the University.

Congress have been pleased to increase my salary for the ensuing year to 1900 dollars. It will not after that time be diminished. They have also allowed me a frank, which will enable me to send you letters and newspapers occasionally.

* * * *

The first Congress under the Constitution terminated on the third of March.

# CHAPTER III.

## SECOND CONGRESS—FIRST AND SECOND SESSIONS.

### TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, March 28th, 1791.

* * * *

The business in which I am engaged continues to be arduous. That part which has arisen under the present government, is under tolerable arrangement; I shall probably be able to render my situation more endurable. I have been well treated since I have been here. Frequent enquiries are made after you, and many gentlemen have expressed their wishes to see you here. I need not add that such an event would render us very happy.

The President has set out on a tour for the southern States. This will serve to conciliate the affections of the people, though he will not be received with all that cordiality, or those zealous acclamations which attended his journey to New England.

The people of this State are very proud of their city, their wealth and their supposed knowledge. I have seen many of their principal men, and discover nothing that tempts me to idolatry. I must see and examine more closely before I say much, but I do not expect that a more intimate acquaintance will furnish me with any self-humiliating sensations.

### TO THE SAME.

PHILADELPHIA.

* * * *

Mr. Eveleigh, the late Comptroller of the Treasury, is dead. No appointment has, or can be made until intelligence is received from the President, who is now in the southern States. There will be much competition for the office; who will be successful I cannot say. I have full reason to believe, that the Secretary of the Treasury wishes that it may fall to me; which is some satisfaction, as he is a man of distinguished talents, and has had the best opportunity to judge of my qualifications.

On this occurrence Hamilton addressed the following letter to the President, recommending Wolcott to the vacant office, and he accordingly received the appointment.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

PHILADELPHIA, April 17, 1791.

You will probably recollect, that previous to your departure from this place, anticipating the event which has taken place, with regard to the death of Mr. Eveleigh, I took the liberty to mention to you that Mr. Wolcott, the present auditor, would be in every respect worthy of your consideration, as his successor in office.

Now that the event has happened, a concern as anxious as it was natural, for the success of the department, united with a sentiment of justice towards Mr. Wolcott, leads me to a repetition of that idea. This gentleman's conduct in the station he now fills, has been that of an excellent officer. It has not only been good, but distinguished. It has combined all the requisites which can be desired; moderation with firmness, liberality with exactness, indefatigable industry with an accurate and sound discernment, a thorough knowledge of business, and a remarkable spirit of order and arrangement. Indeed I ought to say, that I owe very much of whatever success may have attended the merely executive operations of the department to Mr. Wolcott; and I do not fear to commit myself, when I add that he possesses in an eminent degree, all the qualifications desirable in a Comptroller of the Treasury—that it is scarcely possible to find a man in the United States, more competent to the duties of that station than himself—few who could be equally so. It may truly be said of him, that he is a man of rare merit, and I have good evidence that he has been viewed in this light by the members of Congress extensively, from different quarters of the Union, and is so considered by all that part of the public who have had opportunities of witnessing his conduct.

The immediate relation too, which his present situation bears to that of Comptroller, is a strong argument in his favour. Though a regular gradation of office is not admissible in a strict sense, in regard to offices of a civil nature, and is wholly inapplicable to those of the first rank, (such as the heads of the great executive departments,) yet a certain regard to the relation which one situation bears to another, is consonant with the natural ideas of justice, and is recommended by powerful considerations of policy. The expectation of promotion in civil as in military life, is a great stimulus to virtuous exertion, while examples of unrewarded exertion, supported by talent and qualification, are proportionable discouragements. Where they do not produce resignations, they leave men dissatisfied, and a dissatisfied man seldom does his duty well.

In a government like ours, where pecuniary compensations are moderate, the principle of gradual advancement as a reward for good conduct, is perhaps more necessary to be attended to, than in others where offices are more lucrative.

By due attention to it, it will operate as a mean to secure respectable men for offices of inferior emolument and consequence.

In addition to the rest, Mr. Wolcott's experience in this particular line pleads powerfully in his favour. This experience may be dated back to his office of Comptroller of the State of Connecticut, and has been perfected by practice in his present place.

A question may perhaps, sir, arise in your mind, whether some inconvenience may not attend his removal from his present office. I am of opinion that no sensible inconvenience will be felt on this score, since it will be easy for him as Comptroller, who is the immediate superior of the auditor, to form any man of business for the office he will leave, in a short period of time. More inconvenience would be felt by the introduction of a Comptroller not in the immediate train of the business.

Besides this, it may be observed, that a degree of inconvenience on this score cannot be deemed an obstacle, but upon the principle which would bar the progress of merit from one station to another.

On this point of inconvenience a reflection occurs, which I think I ought not to suppress. Mr. Wolcott is a man of sensibility, not unconscious of his own value, and he doubtless must believe that he has pretensions from situation to the office. Should another be appointed and he resign, the derangement of the department would truly be distressing to the public service.

In suggesting thus particularly the reasons, which in my mind operate in favour of Mr. Wolcott, I am influenced by information that other characters will be brought to your view by weighty advocates, and as I think it more than possible that Mr. Wolcott may not be mentioned to you by any other person than myself, I feel it a duty arising out of my situation in the department, to bear my full and explicit testimony to his worth, confident that he will justify by every kind of *substantial* merit any mark of your approbation which he may receive.

I trust sir, that in thus freely disclosing my sentiments to you, you will be persuaded that I only yield to the suggestions of an honest zeal for the public good, and of a firm conviction, that the prosperity of the department under my particular care, (one so interesting to the aggregate movements of the government,) will be best promoted by transferring the present auditor to the office of Comptroller of the Treasury. I have the honour to remain, with the truest and most respectful attachment, sir, your most obedient, &c.,

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

HARTFORD, July 2, 1791.

Dear Sir,

We have received the news of your new appointment, though you have not been kind enough to write us on the subject, and let us know how you feel on having one cubit more added to your stature. We impute it to modesty, which is the prevailing trait of character among courtiers, that your pen has been silent. Be assured, however, that we rejoice in this instance of your good fortune, and the more so; as we know, and every body believes, you richly deserve it. We

wish you more ease than you have had in your business, and really imagine you have laid up reputation enough, or, as the prompter says, have so well got your name up that you may be a little more idle. We are affected at the news of your little boy's illness, but are encouraged from your letter to Mr. Mosely, that we shall hear from you soon of his entire recovery. All your friends here are well. We set off to-morrow morning on a visit to Litchfield.

Are you yet determined about the sale of your house; when you are, let me know it. Present our best love to Betsy. I am always your friend,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, July 4th, 1791.

Sir,

I have been informed by the public prints that the President has been pleased to appoint you the Comptroller of the Treasury. This mark of approbation and confidence is highly honorable to yourself, and will have, I doubt not, a constant influence upon you to persist in that undeviating course of integrity, which, I am happy to believe, has procured you that trust which is really more confidential than any other. Let us ever act, conscious that we are always under the inspection of the Almighty, and that He justly requires of all his creatures that they use the powers which He has given them, for the purposes for which they were bestowed.

I suppose that this morning you are putting on your best coat, decently to celebrate the anniversary of American Independence—an event which seems to become more and more important, and which fully justifies the struggle which we made to obtain it. This country has already much more than recovered all the damage, or real inconvenience, which resulted from the war. What a misfortune must it have been to us, to have been connected with a power which is continually either making, or sending an enemy in every part of the globe.

O. WOLCOTT.

The bank created during the late session was organized during the summer of 1791. A question of importance arose respecting its operation, upon which much difference of opinion existed. This was, whether its action should be confined to Philadelphia and radiate from thence, or should be (under the permissory clause of its charter) extended to other cities, by branches or departments. Upon this subject Wolcott was consulted. His opinion recommended the latter course, and a majority of the stockholders assenting it was adopted, on a plan suggested by him. The capital reserved in Philadelphia was

$4,700,000, and eight branches were established in principal cities of the Union. The whole capital was subscribed, and four thousand more shares applied for than were allowed by law, in two hours after the opening of the books.

Wolcott was offered the Presidency of the bank, with an ample salary, which he declined; "preferring the public service, and believing that such a station would be deemed unsuitable for a young man without property."

It is to be noticed, that the constitutionality of establishing branches elsewhere than at the seat of government, as distinct from the general question, was not mooted at the time. The discovery of this point was reserved for a more enlightened age.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, August 31, 1791.

* * * *

No Auditor has been appointed. Public opinion, which must be attended to, will oblige the President to fill that office with a Southern character. Notwithstanding the talk about salaries, a competent man can hardly be found from that country who will think of serving for such a compensation. Good abilities command high prices at market. It is my wish that the office may yet continue vacant, rather than be supplied with a common character. I had rather suffer temporary fatigue than the eternal vexation which will be my fortune unless the Auditor is a man of talents.

Philadelphia, Oct. 14, 1791.

* * * *

My business is, and will for some time be, burdensome; no Auditor has been yet appointed. As the President is now in Virginia, he will have an opportunity to select a proper character.

The affairs of the United States are apparently prosperous. Pennsylvania is the most factious of any, and here nothing is to be feared. The wild men of the back country will not have perseverance to oppose the steady uniform pressure of law, and must finally submit.

The present session of Congress will be an important one, both as it will indicate the public sentiment with respect to past measures, and will be the proper occasion to perfect and complete the unfinished systems of the former Congress.

From this time a statesman will be able to judge what is the natural bias and inclination of the powers of government. The struggle between states and the United States will now be perceived.

There is a good deal of theory in the administration of this government, and on the whole, their theories are of a very tolerable kind. If whims which are incapable of demonstration, do not set some respectable characters at variance, and thereby produce disgrace to themselves and injury to the public, it will be more owing to their good fortune than their prudence.

The principles of dissension exist, but the principles are the merest trifles. Mr. A. and Mr. J. seem much disposed to quarrel on the questions whether liberty can be maintained in a country which allows citizens to be distinguished by the additions, *Mr.*, *Esquire* and *Deacon;* and whether Tom Paine or Edmund Burke are the greatest fools. Whether one or the other of these positions be true, is of no consequence, except to the persons who dispute and the public, who are sometimes inflamed without reason.

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The second Congress opened its first session on the 29th of October. Jonathan Trumbull, of Connecticut, was chosen Speaker of the House.

The domestic affairs of the country, though prosperous to an unexpected degree, so far as the condition of the people were concerned, were still in a state far from settled. As the measures of the government ripened into a system, the opposition became more concentrated and more active. The assumption of the state debts had created a strong feeling at the South, and the legislatures of Virginia and North Carolina were open in its condemnation; Pennsylvania had protested against the internal revenue; the Bank was every where unpopular among the anti-federalists; in the West, the hostility of the Indians kept the whole border in a ferment.

Abroad, no change had yet taken place in the relations of the country. The French revolution, which was destined at no distant period so intimately to affect their peace, was progressing with rapid strides. In September, the new constitution was adopted and sworn to, and in the following month the Legislative Assembly opened. With England, our relations had not improved; she, however, sent a minister plenipotentiary in the person

of Mr. George Hammond, who was recognized in October. M. de Ternant had, in August, succeeded the Count de Moustiers as Minister from France. The United States had opened negociations with the new Emperor of Morocco, for the purpose of obtaining a recognition of the treaty with his father.

Early in December, the report on the encouragement of domestic manufactures—a document among the most justly celebrated of Mr. Hamilton's productions—was laid before Congress. The estimates for the service of the year 1792 were presented in January. The Secretary calculated the receipts at $3,700,000, and the total expenditures, including the interest on the debt, at about $3,688,000; another report made at the same time, stated the condition of the new loans of the debt. A large proportion, both of the domestic and of the assumed debt, had been already subscribed and the sinking fund now amounted to over $1,000,000. Mr. Hamilton recommended an extension of the time limited in the act, for the subscription of the loans, and urged that the fund should be placed on a permanent basis. The suggestions were in a great measure adopted.

Many important laws were enacted during this session, of which that apportioning the representatives among the different states according to the first census, may be mentioned as the most prominent. This enumeration ascertained the total number of inhabitants at a little short of four millions. The ratio finally adopted was that of one representative for every 33,000, giving 105 as the future number of members.

Further progress was made in arranging the domestic affairs of the country by the passage of acts, regulating the fisheries, establishing the mint and the post-office, providing a uniform militia and prescribing the occasions of calling it into service, and increasing the regular army.

The defeat of Gen. St. Clair, who had succeeded Gen. Harmar in the conduct of the Indian war, rendered the last measure necessary; and upon a report of the Secretary at war, a bill was brought in for the purpose. Upon the question of employing regulars or militia, the two parties were divided; the anti-federalists favoring the latter mode of defence as in their opinion more consistent with the institutions of the country; the federalists supporting the former as the less expensive, and only effectual mode of putting an end to the war. The result of two campaigns it might be supposed had demonstrated in a sufficient manner the value of the democratic mode of warfare. The bill however passed, and it became necessary to seek the means of defraying the additional expense, the former estimates not having contemplated this emergency. A fresh debate arose on the question of referring the ways and means to the Secretary of the Treasury, in which the increasing hostility to his system was manifested; but the opposition failed here also, and the reference was made.

Mr. Hamilton recommended additional duties on certain imported articles in preference to a loan, or to the sale of the bank stock owned by the government, and a bill passed in pursuance.

Congress adjourned on the 8th of May. During the session the nominations of Thomas Pinckney as Minister Plenipotentiary to England, and of Gouverneur Morris to the French Court had been made, and confirmed by the Senate. William Short was also appointed Minister Resident at the Hague; and in this spring commissioned, together with Mr. Carmichael, to effect a treaty with Spain. In the summer, negociations were opened by John Paul Jones, with the Dey of Algiers. Col. David Humphreys had been appointed in the spring of 1791, Minister Resident to Portugal, and the policy of opening an intercourse with the European States had thus been extended.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

January 30th, 1792.

* * * *

The public affairs of our country continue to be prosperous, and though some considerable discontent prevails, there is nothing to excite much concern. The sudden accumulation of wealth in the hands of individuals has introduced a mania which has led in some instances to an ostentatious display, calculated to excite envy and to recall the unfortunate circumstances under which the evidences of the public debt were alienated, to recollection. This as was to be expected, has induced mad speculations on the part of the fortunate, and ebullitions of discontent from those who have been disappointed. The malignity of one party and the pride of the other will probably be cured by a few bankruptcies which may daily be expected, I had almost said, desired.

In Congress there is not much important business to be done. The Indian war, at present, is the subject of deliberation. The result, doubtless, will be to prosecute it, and when all circumstances are considered, it will be found necessary that this should be the case. It is from an attention to present circumstances, and not by attempting to undo what has been done, and deploring past errors that tranquillity is to be expected. The present war is not to be attributed to the present government, but is the result of former treaties for purchasing lands, and from a sparse settlement consequent thereon; against which measures I have heard you formerly express an opinion. The mode of conducting the war, is a subject which requires much consideration, and that mode is best which will produce peace with the least expense of blood and treasure. The inveteracy of the Indians is proved, the extent of our frontiers is well known, and hence results the opinion that it will be cheaper to chastise the Indians at home than to maintain numberless posts on the Ohio. The people will, I hope, believe that no intentional prolongation of the war is to be suspected; the rest must be matter of opinion, and no demonstration of what in fact is best, is attainable.

The law for imposing duties on domestic distilled spirits has met with much opposition in the back parts of Pennsylvania, but the opposition is said to be diminishing.

The more the structure and powers of the present government are considered the more certain it is that it is not calculated to bear much of a load; it rests on the public approbation. It has however a fair chance of continuing while it is esteemed by the best part of the community. Who can say that this will not be found sufficient for our exigencies for a long period, and until artificial support, if that is necessary from the wickedness of human nature, can be attained.

Mr. Harrison has accepted his office and is now in this city. I find him to be an excellent character and an acquisition to the department. From this time I hope my business will be less burdensome.

* * * *

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

February 14th, 1792.

Since my last, nothing material has occurred. The legislature have under consideration a bill for providing for the defence of the frontiers; the bill has passed the House of Representatives and is now before the Senate. A diversity of opinion prevails as to the mode of making provisions; some suppose that it should be trusted entirely to the people of the frontiers to make predatory incursions to harass and destroy the Indians; others suppose that a sufficient force should be raised to take post in the country, in some commanding situation, and by means of the post to overawe the Indians, to reduce them to a treaty, and then by supporting a few small posts, prevent those unjust acts of force on the part of whites and Indians which have brought us into this trouble. The first mode has something in it which has a popular aspect; but to judge of the question properly, it is necessary to know that the western people are a violent and unjust race in many respects, unrestrained by law or considerations of public policy; that to trust the defence to them they must be armed and paid at an immense expense; that their incursions into the Indian country will be for very short periods, that their success, if at all successful, will be very partial; and that they will have no motive to put an end to the war, but rather to prolong it. The better opinion on this subject perhaps, is to take such measures as shall bring about a permanent peace, by the most active operations in the first instance, and to secure it by such arrangements as shall insure justice to the Indians from our people. If these objects can be reconciled with the plan of producing more order in the future settlement of that country, it may save us much trouble and prove beneficial to society.

There is a progress in our affairs towards improvement. It would, however, be much more rapid were the administrators of the government more united. Mr. J. appears to have shown rather too much of a disposition to cultivate vulgar prejudices; accordingly he will become popular in ale houses, and will do much mischief to his country by exciting apprehensions that the government will operate unfavourably.

The English have had a drubbing in India, which it is supposed will render their Asiatic dominions, precarious possessions. If a derangement should happen to their affairs, a considerable revolution in government will be the probable consequence.

In one of your letters you mention an offer which I have had of other business; possibly the thing to which you allude might have been obtained, but I opposed the idea from consideration that the place would be expensive and possibly insecure. I am sensible of the influence of wealth in the affairs of this world, and did not on the whole choose to devote myself to the property of rich men, which I imagine would have been the consequence of allying myself with that class of men without property to support and defend myself. At present I have reason to think my services are satisfactory to the public, and I hope they will take care of me. If they do not I shall try to take care of myself.

FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Litchfield, Feb. 19th, 1792.

Sir,

Your letter of the 30th ult. with its enclosure has been received. * * Whatever were the primary causes of the Indian war, no peace is to be expected with them, till they have received a pretty deep impression by a military operation. A defensive war would doubtless be as ineffectual as it would be expensive. Whenever a treaty shall be made with them, the augmentation of territory will not, I hope, be an object of attention. I cannot but very much apprehend that the vehemence of this war is supported by the British officers, or at least by the British fur dealers. Indeed, it is long since that I have not had the least confidence in the honour or justice of the British government, or nation. Their pride, ferocious manners and keen avarice, induce them to carry what they call commerce, by military force, into all parts of the world. Insolence and a rage for plunder are the characteristics of the nation. No sense of morals has the least influence upon their conduct. Foreigners withdrawing their money from their funds, and placing them in the funds of the United States, not only excites their envy, but induces them to heap upon us all possible expense, with a view to derange our finances, and by every other means endeavour to shake the public confidence in government.

The public finances are the anchor of the United States; if they should again be confused, the political vessel would suffer the most violent concussions. The complexity of their original arrangements, and the rapid rise of the public securities have, it is true, caused many of the ignorant and incautious holders to view the unrivalled opulence of certain people, of low cunning and an ostentatious display of grandeur, with pretty pungent dislike; but uneasiness of this kind is almost entirely confined to large commercial towns. In the country these instances are but few, and their sudden wealth contrasted with their yesterday's business, continues them still the objects of contempt. I trust that our government is neither so popular nor unwise, as to render it impressible in a dangerous degree, either by foreign influence, or by the sinister means of domestic flattery and base insinuation.

I am too ignorant not to believe, but that the late sudden extension of banking business, after foreigners shall not only discontinue placing money in our funds, but shall call for their interest, will be productive of some really disastrous consequences. But I care very little how this shall be, if our national finances are kept in perfect order.

Upon public matters I will let my pen run on as it has done, in a desultory manner, only to make this observation relative to the Indian war, that in the ordinary course of events, every thing will depend upon the character of the principal officers who shall conduct it. If the command shall be given to such men as conducted the two last armaments, nothing but the most disastrous consequences are to be expected. I am happy to know that the President did not originally place those men on the frontier.

O. WOLCOTT.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, March 3d, 1792.

Sir,

Your favour of the 14th ult. has been received. There is a buzz in the air, that a stipulation is proposed by the English, so as to give us a settlement in the West Indies. I trust that we shall not voluntarily bind ourselves to our good behaviour to that nation, till we have a naval power equal to theirs.

I know not that the English have the least shadow of pretence for holding the ports on the western waters. Till they are confined within their limits, peace with the western Indians will be precarious. Upon our western disasters, I find that some of the Tory motive which I thought had been extinguished, discovers itself, together with foreign influence, the ill nature of pride ungratified, disappointed ambition, and an envy which seeks gratification in calumniating public men and public measures. To give effect to those good dispositions, all the ignorance, prejudice and avarice of mankind are called upon for aid, but it will be of no purpose. We have yet too strong a bias to support and establish a government, which almost every farmer, merchant and mechanic says, has brought us in money sufficient, gives us security, imposes no sensible burden, and has alleviated us from the state debts which heretofore oppressed us. People I believe in the northern states, generally feel very easy, except some ambitious, unprincipled men, who for want of merit or other means, wish to excite public discontent in order to gratify their pride ; and as to those men, I believe they will be generally disappointed in their pursuits. The white savages upon the western frontier, must if necessary be governed in the same manner as the black ones are, or ought to be.

OLIV. WOLCOTT.

## TO FREDERICK WOLCOTT,

PHILADELPHIA, April 6th, 1792.

* * * *

We have no news but what you get regularly. Congress have proceeded but slowly ; the most important business of the session remains unfinished. It is however expected that the session will end in all April. There is some faction and diversity of opinion with us as every where else, but I hope the affairs of our country will prosper.

We shall make you a visit in the ensuing summer ; when I hope for a short time to feel as formerly, free from the vexations and toils of a busy life. Col. Tallmadge is here, and will tell you when he returns how I live. I am more plain and certainly work harder than most Quakers. I shall not without some misfortune befals me, be in debt, but I shall never be rich. I hope to do some good, and to steer through the maze without injuring others, and with sufficient philosophy to be inattentive to small disappointments.

You know not how much I love you and some of my Connecticut friends. I pray that I may never love them less, as a reflection on the past pleasures of their society is my chief amusement. * * * *

## TO JEDEDIAH MORSE.

PHILADELPHIA, May 6, 1792.

I received in season your letter of Dec. 20th, and request you to excuse my neglect in replying to it before this time. The continued throng of business in which I have been engaged, has left me no leisure till lately, to comply with your wishes, and the work is already so perfect, that I am certain it can receive but little improvement from any observations which I can make.

So far as your observations have been made upon the settled parts of the United States, they are founded on, and supported by the general testimony of the public. With the exception of some remarks upon the southern states, particularly upon the North Carolinians, who complain that you have not praised them according to their merits, your descriptions have been satisfactory to the interested parties. I have no data for determining whether our southern brethren complain with reason, and sincerely wish that they had produced some public indications, that society was not in a rude state in the southern and western settlements.

In describing the unsettled northern regions, I perceive Carver is cited as an authority. I know not whom you can take for a guide, more consistently with the present state of public opinion, and yet I suspect but little credit is due to the book published in his name. By information which I have obtained respecting Carver, I am satisfied that his book was compiled under very inauspicious circumstances. He doubtless resided a number of years in the western country, but was an ignorant man, utterly incapable of writing such a book. When in England he was in needy circumstances, and he applied to the government, stating that he had made important discoveries, for which he was entitled to receive compensation. His notes were inspected by a board, who pronounced them to be unimportant. A sum of money was however given him, more in charity to relieve his wants than as a reward for important services. When his money was expended he renewed his application, but was refused. He then abused the administration for having obtained of him his work, without having paid a proper compensation. To silence his clamor, the notes which had been deposited with the officers of the government were restored, which were soon after pawned by Carver with a bookseller. There is reason to suspect, that the book styled Carver's Travels, is a mere compilation from other books and common reports, supported by some new remarks which Carver may possibly have made. It will therefore in my judgment be most safe for the future reputation of your book, that but little credit be given to Carver's Travels, except where his accounts are supported by some collateral authority.

As the best aid which I can furnish towards your work, I transmit two Tennessee documents. These tables are curious and are worth preserving. I have

some expectations of being able to complete in season some additional tables. If I do they shall be transmitted.

With the most sincere wishes for your complete success, and that your labors may be as profitable for yourself, as they are honourable to your country, I am, &c.

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The tendency to a distinct organization of parties, the existence of which has been already noticed, was still more decisively shown during the past session. As the fiscal system of Mr. Hamilton gradually unfolded itself, the opposition, alarmed at its necessary consequence in strengthening the federal powers of the Union, became more strenuous in their exertions to defeat it. In the financial, more than in any other department of legislation, was this influence visible, for by its means preëminently could the interests of men be attracted to, and bound up in that of the general government; and as the citizen came to regard himself as one of a nation, in the same proportion the local gave way to the central attachment. The causes which made the sovereignty of the states so vital in importance, the power of the Union so dreaded in its anticipated effects, will be hereafter a subject of mention. It is now sufficient to follow their workings.

Of all the measures heretofore adopted, the assumption of the State debts gave the deepest stab to the hopes of the anti-federalists. It was no argument to their minds that these debts actually existed, were contracted for common defence, that they ought in equity to be paid by the whole, and that means of payment could more easily be found by the union than by conflicting, and often inadequate provisions of single states. They saw but this—that the powerful body of creditors would thenceforward look to the Union, and not to its members for payment.

The blow had been followed up. Duties were laid on imported goods. The merchant from that time owed his monies to the United States, and paid them to her officers.

Internal taxes were imposed; the returns were made to a collector of the general government. A Bank was established; the paper which passed current from Vermont to Georgia was of federal origin. A mint was erected; the arms of the states were not stamped upon its coin. Protection was recommended to American manufactures; it was the Union that alone could do all this. Commerce was encouraged; it was the marine of the United States. Every successive act by which some powerful interest was touched, brought the influence of that interest in favor of its source. The power of the State was diminished, because its citizens looked elsewhere than to its legislature for the most important objects of attention.

Against Mr. Hamilton as the author of a system which produced these results, the personal enmity of the opposition had been heretofore chiefly directed; and by constant opposition to all references to him, they had endeavored to defeat his influence.

Hitherto a majority had supported the administration; the attention of the anti-federalists was now directed to a more concerted plan of opposition. A leader had already presented himself in the person of the Secretary of State. Known to have been originally, although guardedly, hostile to the constitution, and particularly to that portion of it which gave it the means of an existence independent of the will of the States; an enemy to the financial system of the federalists, and an antagonist to its principal author; possessing, from his place in the cabinet and the character of his abilities, the greatest advantage in thwarting the measures of Hamilton; representing Virginia, which was the stronghold of his party, and well disposed from private ambition to place himself in the road to the Presidency; he had willingly seized, or rather suffered himself to be placed, in the post of chief of the opposition.

The illness of the President in 1790 had directed the attention of his party to the possibility of a speedy succes-

sion, and against Mr. Adams as a probable rival it now turned its arms. As yet, General Washington could not be attacked with safety.

To break down the hopes of the Vice President; to hold up Mr. Jefferson to public view as the destined successor of Washington; to keep alive or awaken a distrust of federal measures; a press suggested itself as a necessary instrument. Its conductor was found in Philip Freneau, the superintendent of a paper printed in New York, who was induced by a clerkship in Mr. Jefferson's department, to remove to Philadelphia for the purpose.

The National Gazette was commenced in October, 1791, and during its short lived existence was notorious for its scandalous falsehood and misrepresentation, its fulsome adoration of Mr. Jefferson, and its gross abuse of leading federal men. Against Mr. Adams particularly, who, from his inoffensive position as Vice President, it might have been supposed, would have escaped unnoticed, it was, as a future possible President, incessant in its vituperation.

The threats of resistance which had been made to the law imposing taxes on domestic spirits, were, during this summer, fulfilled in the western part of Pennsylvania, where a dangerous spirit of sedition was manifested. The conduct of the leaders in this movement, and the political use made of it, sufficiently pointed out its object. These will be hereafter recurred to in narrating the events of 1794.

TO MICHAEL J. STONE.

PHILADELPHIA, June 9th, 1792.

* * * *

Since we parted I have been plodding on in the old track, and have not in any way altered except that I am one year older. I read, write and think as much as is consistent with a due attention to the duties of a burdensome office, and am contented with my situation, though it is far less inviting than a country life to one of my disposition. * * * I know but little of what is

going forward in the political world, and wish that I knew less, or that the invitations to acquire information were more alluring. An unfortunate jealousy is too apparent in some of the most influential characters in our country. The consequence is, that questions are not so calmly discussed, characters are not so fairly estimated, and the people are not so perfectly availed of the talents which have been selected for their use, as every honest and patriotic man must desire. Time alone can discover whether these evils proceed from permanent or temporary causes. It is ardently to be desired that experience may evince that the interests of the great divisions of the United States are reconcilable with each other.

Nothing that has fallen under my observation will warrant those gloomy forebodings or those austere remarks which are constantly indulged. Particular measures may have been injudiciously adopted, individual men may have been improperly influenced by zeal or avarice, but the prevailing sense of the people, and of the public men, has, as I firmly believe, been favorably inclined to public order and the security of equal rights. The number who can possibly be actuated by other wishes, is too inconsiderable, and their efforts too feeble to justify any serious alarm.

In addition to the security which must result from established habits, from the allodial tenure of real property and from the checks upon ambition, which are created by the civil divisions of our country ; wise men will infer a sure guaranty for public liberty from the temper and genius of the times. There can be no doubt that the governments of the old world will soon undergo a general change. The structure of civil societies will probably be different, but under all, social liberty will be unequivocally secured. In America, there is no public evil to redress. Knowledge and philosophy have excluded priestcraft ; a love of leisure and a general, if not universal, passion for acquiring property, have extinguished every sentiment on which the military character can be erected ; under what circumstances can a distinction of civil orders be made ? Surely under none that imagination can contemplate as existing, or likely to exist, in this country. Where, then, is the danger to public liberty ? Was any people ever enslaved, or even abridged of their rights, except by priests, by soldiers or by nobles ?

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, Oct. 8th, 1792.

* * * *

We have no news. The election in this state is not over, and will be a contested one—both parties are confident of their success. It is, however, said that the President's proclamation, and an apprehension that zeal for liberty may be carried too far, as has been deplorably the case in France, will have an effect in favor of temperate men at the ensuing election.

I understand that Mr. Burr will be the candidate in opposition to Mr. Adams as Vice President, and that he will be powerfully supported. It may be well to think of this when the choice of electors is made, at least so far that it be not

taken for granted that Mr. Adams will have an unanimous vote. All the votes of New England will probably be necessary to secure his election, and should be given in his favor if the people are satisfied with his conduct and wish his re appointment.

An arrival yesterday from Ostend, brought intelligence that M. Fayette, with several officers, were taken by the Austrians as they were reconnoitering the enemy. It seems that some suspicions prevailed that Fayette was taken prisoner with his own consent. It is bad for the French either way. The poor Poles are vanquished, and the hopes of all good men, in respect to their revolution, blasted.

## TO THE SAME.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 16, 1792.

* * * *

We are all well, and have no news that can certainly be relied on; but a letter has been received in town, from Charleston, which mentions an arrival from France as late as the second of September, stating that the Queen and 5000 people of Paris had been murdered, that the King was missing, and the Duke of Brunswick within 30 miles of Paris, with his army. Perhaps this is not true, and yet, considering the wretched state of the nation, it is not very improbable. The cause of the revolution appears to be in greater danger than I ever supposed it would be, and this has been, in a great degree, occasioned by the violence of the Jacobin faction.

In this country, electioneering is the great business of the politicians. The votes have been taken in this state, and from what has been heard, there is a prospect of a good representation. The Vice President, it is said, will be opposed. I will thank you to inform me who the electors will be from Connecticut.

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The President's speech at the opening of the session in November, 1792, after noticing several other subjects of domestic importance, stated his opinion that the condition of the national finances was now sufficiently matured to enable Congress to enter upon a systematic and effectual arrangement for the regular redemption of the public debt, and urged its adoption. A resolution recognizing the expediency of the measure, and calling upon the Secretary of the Treasury to report a plan for the purpose, after a debate, in which the expediency was denied and the reference opposed, finally passed. Every possible delay was, however, interposed—the anti-federalists hoping that

at the next Congress a majority would be found in their favor. The report was made, but before any action could be taken upon it, charges of misapplication and misappropriation of the public funds were preferred against Mr. Hamilton. These charges were refuted by him in three successive and very able reports, and all imputations upon his character were satisfactorily removed; but the accordance of certain applications with the laws authorizing them, being disputed, resolutions were brought forward, censuring his conduct. Further enquiries followed for information as to the management of the office, and the whole of the session was thus spent in sifting the conduct of the Secretary. To the deep mortification of his enemies, they resulted only in establishing the wisdom and honesty of his administration—a circumstance which no wise diminished the personal animosity shown towards him in the debates and the partizan press. These enquiries as regarded the treasury, exceedingly increased the duties of the officers, and to Wolcott especially they became most arduous, as the data on which the answers were made were all prepared by him.

The investigation served one purpose of the opposition; it prevented any question being taken on the report. It seems somewhat anomalous that a party which had charged the administration with the wish to perpetuate the debt, should thus have thwarted its measures to discharge it, and an explanation of the fact can only be found in a fixed determination to break down the Secretary. The conduct of the federalists on this occasion was honorable to them, and manifested their confidence in Mr. Hamilton. The resolutions of enquiry were suffered to pass without debate.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., Nov. 21, 1792.

* * * *

A strenuous attempt has been made by the Virginians to prevent a reference of a question of finance to the Secretary of the Treasury; they, however, failed of success. On this point there appears to be the most obstinate opposition. The amount of the argument against references is, that the right of originating money bills exists with the House of Representatives, that this right is incommunicable, and that the opinion of the Secretary of the Treasury has such weight with the House as to destroy the independence of a majority of the members, who, they say, from the necessity of the case, must and will be determined by his advice. It is to little purpose that reasoning is attempted against prejudices of this kind; men who recur to such arguments betray great ignorance of business and of human nature. They believe—what is impossible, that fifty or sixty men can unite their mutual exertions on one subject, so as to produce a plan or write systematically; and they likewise must believe, that because a proposition is fairly demonstrated so as to force a conviction upon the mind, it ought, on that account, to be distrusted; thus torturing the only causes of belief into reasons for incredulity, and extolling a man's talents for the sake of exciting a distrust of his judgment.

It is the exclusive privilege of the modern philosophers to be more absurd, the more their faculties are employed, and to arrive at ignorance by more intense application of thought, than would be necessary to render them useful, wise and learned.

The President's determination, expressed in his speech, to support the laws, has given much satisfaction; the opposition is now confined to a small part of this state, and will soon cease.

The electors for Pennsylvania are now known, and it is said that all the votes except one, or at most two, will be for the present possessors of the offices of President and Vice President. I hope that it will not be the disgrace of Connecticut that the choice will be in the least affected by the insidious contrivances which have been practised. It is now understood that a systematical effort has been made in every state, which has been conducted with great address and secrecy. The plan really is to elect George Clinton, and where a direct interest cannot be made in his favor, it is intended to diminish the votes for Mr. Adams. I think it is likely, unless some attention is given to the subject, that votes will be solicited for such men as Mr. Hancock, &c., &c. Not that they expect that any other effect will be produced than a *plurality* in favor of the real candidate.

I do not know but that there is as little trouble arising from intrigue in this country as can ever be expected, while man continues what he has ever been. The general affairs of the country are, I am persuaded, prosperous, and if there are any considerable abuses, they have not come to my knowledge. Some of our Southern friends appear to be uneasy, but I am not satisfied that they are wiser or honester men than those who are supporting the plans in operation.

We have no news from France, except what has come to your knowledge by the papers. What will be the result of the scene of confusion and carnage which has commenced, cannot be conjectured. Nothing, perhaps, is certain, except that France must have a government, and that their present attempts to establish one of the republican kind must give way for the present.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

MIDDLETOWN, Dec. 5, 1792.

Sir,

I am here, and have attended, with all the other electors of the state, the election of President and Vice President of the United States, and am happy to be able to inform you that upon counting their votes, they were united in their choice of President Washington and Vice President Adams. In this election, they were very cordial, and impressed with the deepest conviction of the propriety of continuing those officers in their present stations. The efforts which have been made to affect the election of the Vice President, I sincerely wish and trust, may be found ineffectual. I am certain that no choice could be more improper than that of George Clinton. I have a vile opinion of the man, and believe nothing but the grossest ignorance, or the most nefarious designs, could have proposed such a candidate. The enemies of Mr. Adams are mistaken if they conceive that George Clinton can ever engage a vote in this state. His friends in New York wish to give him an honorable retreat from the resentment of the majority of the people of the state; those who think unworthily of him, wish to remove him from the state government. It is melancholy to think that a government which has been found so beneficial in its operations, should be so soon attacked by a set of ambitious, partial and selfish men. * * In haste.

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## TO FREDERICK WOLCOTT.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 15th, 1792.

* * * *

You have heard the votes of New England for President and Vice President. In New York, all for Clinton; Pennsylvania, one for Clinton, the rest for Adams; Delaware, all for Adams; Maryland, all for Adams, except two who did not attend and lost their votes. The state was agreed in favour of Adams. Virginia, all for Clinton; North Carolina and Kentucky, not known yet, but will be for Clinton; South Carolina, divided about equally, as is expected: Georgia will be for Clinton. Mr. Adams has a good majority, and the division against him is occasioned by faction and misrepresentations, which will give way on a better understanding of the state of things.

Nothing new has happened here. I think Congress is something more placid than at the last session. We are waiting impatiently for news from France. Our Jacobins are indecisive while the fate of their brethren is in suspense. By a

strange kind of reasoning, some suppose the liberties of America depend on the right of cutting throats in France. When the Duke of Brunswick is beat, which he probably will be, we shall hear the cry against tyranny and aristocracy renewed in this country. It it strange that we cannot be contented with our lot, which is certainly a good one, but must raise disquiets out of the quarrels of other nations. Instead of imitating the French, we should wish them the same situation with ourselves.

I am well and in good spirits, though I work hard and hope I perform my duty. I am *not* ambitious. The office I hold is as good as an office can be. It is suited to my talents, and I wish for nothing more. This you do not believe, but it is because you are plagued with a passion which has become extinct in my bosom. * * * *

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., Jan. 27, 1793.

* * * *

Congress has completed but little business, and considerable divisions have existed. It is most evidently the intention of the opposition to the present system, that but little shall be done. The next Congress, they calculate, will be more favorable to their views.

The papers printed here indicate a settled determination in a certain party to destroy the popularity of the leading men of our country; even the President's character no longer remains inviolable. Several virulent papers have been printed by Freneau. The pretences for the attack are the reserved manners of the President (which are said to proceed from an affectation of royalty) and his not having interested himself in support of the late demand of the army. The real difficulty, I imagine, is the great debts due in the southern states to the British; when they are paid or rendered desperate, many difficulties will vanish.

A variety of requisitions have been made upon the treasury for information, calculated to excite suspicions of mal-administration. Every thing will, however, turn out properly.

PHILA., Feb. 8th, 1793.

I presume Giles' motions and speech have been seen by you, in which he has intimated that the Treasury Department have cabbaged several millions of the public money, for which they cannot account. Though I have no conception that this was seriously believed by any, it became indispensable that a complete disclosure of our pecuniary affairs should be made to Congress and the public; full scope to an enquiry has been, therefore, invited. The labor which this has occasioned has been great, but it will, I presume, answer a good purpose. The effect cannot be indifferent; either the public confidence will be promoted or destroyed. My opinion is sufficiently known when I declare that the scrutiny has given me pleasure. I enclose you the first report of the Secretary on the

subject. The statements which are referred to are not yet printed; you will, however, perceive a refutation of the most important of the surmises which was hazarded.

The affairs of this country appear to be verging to some important crisis. The opposition to the measures which have been adopted, conduct as if they were influenced by something more than rivalry and personal ambition. Prejudices are excited and passions enlisted into their party which are alike hostile to every system of government, and such as cannot fail to impede business and render the public service insupportable. The best solution which I can give of this disquiet is the pressure of the foreign debts due from the Virginia planters; these, they imagined, had been thrown off. The effect of the treaty and of the constitution is to make them responsible; at least, this is believed, though no decision of this question has been made by the national judiciary. The prospect of poverty and dependence to the Scotch merchants is what they cannot view with patience. They seem determined to weaken the public force, so as to render the recovery of these debts impossible. On the merits of this question I form no opinion, but a strict, impartial and vigorous exercise of the constitutional authority, I deem indispensable to the repose of the country. No rational attempt to support the existing systems ought to be omitted. The experiment of a union with the southern states ought to be now made conclusively; if it shall prove unsuccessful we ought to part like good friends, but the separation ought to be eternal. The inevitable danger, loss of property, interruption of industry, and painful anxiety, which are inseparable from revolutions, forbid the repetition of another experiment.

The papers printed here contain much insufferable cant about aristocracy—this political vice is supposed to prevail in New England, but especially in Connecticut! Much pains will doubtless be exerted to convince the people that they are unhappy. I wish to be informed whether any impression is or can be made upon them—the weak side of that people, if they have any, is to be suspicious that they are cheated. Will it be possible for the Southern people to make the opinion prevail? Of several things they may be confident, viz: that the noisy declaimers are, most of them, unworthy of confidence; that their public affairs never were more honestly conducted; and, lastly, that no people on earth ever realized, equally with themselves, that liberty and equality for which the world is now contending. If they maintain their present manners and character, I have no doubt that the first moment of candid and impartial reflection will attribute to them the first rank in society—that their institutions will serve as models for free nations and themes for philosophical and political discussion. The man who attempts to disturb their tranquillity at this time, is the worst enemy of his country and society.

It has been given out that Jefferson will resign his office next March, since which a *Mirabeau* has addressed him with much adulation, and stated how much the *republican* interests in this country will suffer from his retirement. Time will show whether this is a trick to gain a few compliments.

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

HARTFORD, February 9, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I can easily imagine you have not leisure to write to your friends at present, as you find full employment for your time in accounting for the millions of cash that some of you in the Treasury Department have slily put away in your money vaults. I had before imagined that the only reward you would ever receive for your hard services, would be the honor of serving the Union with ability and fidelity. But Mr. Giles, it seems, means to pay you off in solid coin; it is better to receive it from an enemy than not at all. I generally find those pay me best who love me least. However, let it come from what quarter it will, I am glad you have so much cash, and as there is no difference between being a rogue and honest, you may as well keep it, and go snacks in the prize.

The government still retains its popularity in Connecticut among all our bipeds. We rejoice in the victories of the French, but believe we shall wait till they get through the scrape before we get drunk in honour of their exploits. Our citizesses quite execrate their new name, and are determined neither to marry nor be given in marriage, and those who now are so, as well as those who are not, not to have any female children till the term is exploded. They will have no objection to being called biped in common with men, if it can be clearly shown that term denotes nothing above the foot or ankle, but as it comes so near, they are suspicious of mischief.

Your friend Hopkins, for three weeks past, looks as affrighted as if he had been plunged into the wolf's den after Put.'s ghost. Mr. Trumbull enjoys his health better than when you was here. All your friends are well; we live quite happily. I have as much business as I love to do, though I don't get so much money as I want to spend. * * * Give my best love to sister Betsy. I am, with the most cordial wishes for your happiness, your friend,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

HARTFORD, Feb. 17, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter of the 8th instant, enclosing the Secretary's Report, with a great deal of satisfaction, for by some means or another, I am become as much interested in the prosperity of that really worthy man, as in the fate of an old friend. Giles' motion and speech made no impression in this quarter, not even on the most ignorant; we had no other anxiety about the business, only that Mr. Hamilton might seasonably administer to him the merited chastisement. He has now for his recompense to feel at least the confusion of detected rascality, whatever he may of remorse. One excellence of the chastisement is that it quickly follows the offence.

It is certainly a sign of the downfall of the party, that they become so impudent and inconsiderate in their attacks, and aim their shafts at so many. Among

other instances of their folly, it is not the least to think they can gull people in New England by their noisy clamour. It may do with their untaught back country people at their huskings, but our common folks know their true character, which is bullyism—a Yankee wont be bullied by any body.

We shall attend carefully to your papers, and I have no doubt remain firm. Our greatest danger is from the contagion of levelism; what folly is it that has set the world agog to be all equal to French barbers. It must have its run, and the anti-feds will catch at it to aid their mischievous purposes. I believe it is not best to let it pass without remark, and before long the authors of entire equality will shew the world the danger of their wild rant. We treat their Boston notions with derision, and the name of citizen and citess, are only epithets of fun and joke. Is there any danger of a change of measures from the increased representation? If not, the government is safe, for federal measures will gain strength from opposition; a noisy set of discontented demagogues make a rant, and it seems as if they were about breaking up the foundations, but the great body of men of property move slowly, but move with sure success. * * *
I am your sincere friend,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

# CHAPTER IV.

## SUMMER AND FALL OF 1793.

The second Congress of the United States expired with the third of March. On the fourth, Washington was the second time inaugurated President.

### TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, March 9th, 1793.

* * * *

The last winter has required every exertion which I could make. To enable the public to judge of the attack upon the Treasury, a great variety of documents have been produced which could not be made out without much attention, and the bestowment of considerable extra time. This has rendered it difficult for me to write as often as I wished. My business has somewhat fallen in arrear, and I shall be busy for some time to bring it up.

Now the trouble is nearly over I am glad it has been suffered; the advantages to the public, and the chance of the plots of a party being better understood than they would have been otherwise, affords a compleat compensation for what is past.

### TO FREDERICK WOLCOTT.

PHILADELPHIA, March 9th, 1793.

I received your letter of the 5th instant, and though the information therein contained is somewhat more encouraging than when my father wrote last, I cannot but feel the most extreme solicitation as to the issue of my mother's illness. The probability doubtless is, that we must soon feel the pang of separation from a parent, whose kindness and affection to us, and whose virtues and respectable example will demand a perpetual homage to her memory. When we shall be called to mourn the afflicting bereavement, it will become us to reflect that she arrived to the usual period of human life and that in every situation she was

justly esteemed and honoured. Sincere ought to be our gratitude that such has been the tenor of her life as to render death no evil to her, and as to be a source of consolation for a loss ordained to be inevitable.

I have been exceedingly engaged this winter, which has prevented me from writing to my friends as often as I otherwise should have done. You have doubtless heard of the attack of the Virginians upon the Treasury. The result has been such as the merits of the case required. Every thing has been fully explained, much to the honor of Col. Hamilton and to the great chagrin of his adversaries. I enclose the journals of the house on this subject.

* * * *

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, March 20th, 1793.

* * * *

I enclose a paper which contains an account of the fate of poor Louis. Melancholy has been the reverse of fortune for him who was once the "*Protector of the rights of Mankind,*" but lately a *murderer and traitor.* The extremes of power and wretchedness, of splendour and abasement, of extravagant applause and unmerited censure which have checquered the life of this unfortunate man, prove the fickleness of public opinion and the instability of greatness. It remains to see the result of the great experiment which the French are attempting.

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

HARTFORD, March 24, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 4th and 20th instant. The event of the death of Louis which the last communicated, is a wanton act of barbarity, disgraceful even to a Parisian mob, and threatens the success of Republicanism in France. One serviceable purpose however, it may be expected to answer in this country, to check the passions of those who wish to embroil us in a desperate cause, and unhinge our government. The gratitude due to Louis and his Queen for their protection of America has been lost in the glare of the revolution, but will be revived with redoubled energy.

In reading the debates on Mr. Giles' resolutions against the Secretary, I find a consequence given to them by his friends they don't merit; they were the ebullitions of mere party spite, and every body was convinced of it, as soon as they appeared; they deserved no other attention but that examination the constitution required, and silent, indignant contempt. I have not in a single instance known a person express any other feelings about them. Debate and eloquence might be necessary to counteract their venom in the Southern States, but there could be no other occasion for it.

We shall continue in New England, attached to the government as long as we derive so many blessings from it. And it may be expected the southern people

will oppose it, till it accommodates itself to a state of negro-hood, debt, luxury and gambling; they must be radically mended before they will love a good government. * * * * I am your friend,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Litchfield, March 25th, 1793.

Sir,

* * * *

The attack made upon the Secretary of the Treasury, is, I believe, with us held in universal detestation. People observe and feel that since the institution of the new government, such has been its benign operation, that the country from a state of the greatest despondency and almost total relaxation of all industry, has obtained opulence and ease, and that every nerve of enterprise and industry is excited, and an entire confidence is placed in the public administration. The fiscal department possesses its full share of this favourable public opinion. To introduce such an attack at the close of a session, and when it was very improbable that the Secretary could within so short a period furnish the necessary documents, and after this, with the utmost exertion had been effected, then for Giles and his junto to move a postponement of a decision, was, as Mercer expressed himself with a different relation, such a piece of baseness as would have disgraced the council of Pandemonium. It appears to me evident that there are a set of men in Congress, who from pride, ignorance, ambition or interest, or all of them, mean to make a steady exertion materially to derange the present system of government. The pedagogue who is at the head of one of the departments is prominent in this business. Our confidence and expectations must be principally placed upon the stability of the Executive.

Why Congress refuses to admit any provision for the payment of the balance which shall be found due to the particular states, I cannot imagine. The liquidation of these accounts is left absolutely with the commissioners and a governmental promise to pay the balances.

Why have stocks lately fallen so considerably? Is it owing to a want of confidence in government, the foreign demand for specie, or an accumulation of banks? This question, you well know, is a matter of curiosity only.

I felt a heart-felt sorrow at the murder of Louis, as I believe it may properly be called; an event it is true which might be expected, for whenever a people go so far as to imprison their prince, they will never again trust him, but will destroy him. France, whether they shall be successful against the numerous foes which they shall have to contend with, or not, have every thing to suffer before their affairs get settled. I hope that the President will continually superintend the conduct of the Secretary of State, so as not to suffer by his indiscretion these states to be involved in the vortex of European politics. I did not know that your friend Barlow had been such a visionary till I had seen his amendments to the French Constitution. Yours, &c.,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

TO FREDERICK WOLCOTT.

PHILADELPHIA, 1793.

* * * *

I have been and shall be very busy. The Treasury department have a sturdy and difficult part to manage in this day of bustle and inquiry.

Enclosed you will receive a newspaper which contains a sketch of the new constitution of France. Please to present it to my father with my best respects.

You will in this outline see that the poor Frenchmen have much to suffer before they settle their affairs. An executive with seven heads, a judiciary chosen by the people at large, and a right, reserved to each citizen to propose new or the repeal of existing laws, will produce more friction than can easily be overcome. Yet in this country are men sworn to praise this plan in derogation of our own constitution. May God preserve it from the effects of such fanaticism.

The past year had been an eventful one to Europe. A new act in the political drama now acting in France, had opened; monarchy had been abolished and the nation proclaimed a republic; Louis XVI. had fallen by the guillotine; the convention had successively declared war against England, Holland and Spain; the horrors of the revolution had commenced in earnest, and its baleful influence was not to be confined to the old world.

The interest excited in America by the commencement of the French revolution, had increased with its progressive stages, and rose to enthusiasm on the final overthrow of the monarchy. The affection of the nation to its ancient ally became devotion when France assumed the name and form of a republic.

It was thought that a brand snatched from our own altars had lighted the fire of liberty upon the wrecks of ancient tyranny; the old world was following the example of the new; a political millennium had commenced, whose empire would be universal, and the armies of France, spreading over Europe, were hailed as the pioneers of its advent. That this opinion should obtain widely, was natural. Few men knew as yet the direc-

tion which had already been given to the struggle, and how little it resembled in principle the war of independence. Fewer, still, seem to have possessed the wisdom to perceive in the character of the French themselves, their essential unfitness for self-government, or that a people bred up without knowledge of their rights or experience in the exercise of them, could not at once attain that knowledge or that experience. But when the feelings or the passions of a nation are enlisted, there is as little exercise of reflection as in the like case of an individual, and not much more tolerance. And accordingly it happened that the body of the American people, not only entertained no doubt of the genuineness or the ultimate success of French republicanism, but, moreover, viewed all doubts in others as treason to the cause itself, arising from a love of monarchy.[a]

It was in the ranks of the federal party that those were chiefly found who were obnoxious to this charge. The foresight of its leaders early predicted the elements of speedy dissolution in the ill-balanced scheme of the convention; nor were their forebodings dissipated by the violent death of the king and the fearful scenes which followed it. They, too, had procured the introduction into our constitution of the features in which that now adopted by the French differed from it most essentially, and it was through their influence that what of strength and efficiency the government possessed, had been given to it.

The present, therefore, afforded an opportunity too tempting to be neglected, for the anti-federalists to destroy alike the citadel and its defenders. Adroitly harping upon the catch-word of monarchism, they succeeded in converting the national bias into the instrument of party. Newspapers and pamphlets teemed with invectives, in which the federalists were charged with the design of in-

[a] V. Marsh. chap. v. 317.

troducing a government similar to that of England into America, and the senate, the judicial and executive departments, were pointed out as at once the proofs and the instruments of the intended change. The French constitution was celebrated as the perfection of democracy, and the people incited to fraternize with a nation as bloodthirsty and profligate in freedom, as they had been corrupt and slavish in loyalty.

Thus was the way opened by faction at home, for the introduction of intrigue from abroad, and it was not long before the advantage was seized.

The French republic, desirous of an ally in the wars in which she had engaged with all Europe, speedily turned her attention to the United States, as the one which, from situation, from extent of commerce and natural productions, as well as from friendship, would prove the most serviceable and the most manageable.

The late government, from fear that the United States would become too powerful and too independent of the protection of France, had thwarted all her attempts at treaty-making with the European powers, prevented her acquiring the navigation of the Mississippi and other commercial advantages, and sedulously fostered the coolness with England. By treaty, too, it had reserved very important privileges, by which its influence could be maintained and extended, of which the consular convention entered into in 1788, between Montmorin and Jefferson, formed a striking example. Those who now directed the republic, were no less clear-sighted in employing, than the ministers of Louis had been in preserving their opportunities.

In April of this year, the news of the declaration of war by France, against Great Britain and Holland, arrived in the United States, and with it, M. Genet, a new minister. The time and place of his arrival were as judiciously selected, as the envoy himself had been. The news of the

war coming at the same time, increased to an extraordinary degree the excitement already existing in favor of France, and disposed a large portion of the nation to an actual co-operation with their ally against its enemy. Landing at Charleston, a seaport distant from the capital, the envoy had a full opportunity of ascertaining the temper of the people before presenting himself to their government. Sanguine in his temperament, of uncontrolled passions, excited to a degree of insanity by the new-born ideas which raged in France, possessed of the wildest dreams of national glory and aggrandizement, in a word, the very incarnation of Jacobinism, he was the fittest brand which the assembly could have selected to hurl into the magazine of political strife. His reception was well fitted to encourage him. Public authorities and private citizens vied with each other in glorifying the representative of European democracy. On all sides he beheld the disposition he desired, and he did not delay in profiting by it. Vessels were at once fitted out and armed, men were enlisted, and commissions issued under his authority to cruise against the enemies of France. The consuls, in accordance with a decree of the French national convention, erected themselves into courts of admiralty, and proceeded to exercise their "privileges and immunities" by trying and condemning, in American ports, prizes captured from a nation with whom America was at peace.

M. Genet's progress to, and his reception at Philadelphia, were marked with the same evidences of popular infatuation and of diplomatic arrogance. That all gratitude toward the fallen dynasty might be extinguished, in presenting his letters to the President, this "representative of our ally" presented also the proofs of the views entertained by Vergennes and Montmorin toward the United States; official documents, manifesting "in plain terms the solicitude of France and Spain to exclude the United States from the Mississippi; their jealousies of the grow-

ing power and ambition of this country; and the wish of France, expressed while the question was pending, that the constitution might not be adopted, as it suited France that the United States should remain in their present state, because if they should acquire the consistency of which they were susceptible, they would soon acquire a force or a power which they would be very ready to abuse."[a]

If republican France thus saw fit to expose the Machiavelism of the monarchy, it was only that under cover of this frankness she might exercise a still more treacherous influence herself. The object of the new government was to draw the United States into the war against Great Britain. The instructions of her envoy pointed out to him, in case the government should be found unmanageable, the same policy here which proved so successful in Europe—the severance of the people from their constituted authorities.

The conduct of Genet, and the disposition manifested to support him in it, rendered necessary the immediate interposition of the government to prevent the continuance of a course which must have resulted, not only in an irreparable breach of neutrality, but what would prove more disastrous, in a surrender of the independence of the country. The new position in which the United States were placed by this first occurrence of a general war in Europe, and by the sudden and violent change in the form of government of the French nation, rendered necessary the digestion of a permanent system of policy in regard to external relations. This was settled and established after mature consideration. The proclamation of neutrality thereupon was issued on the 22d of April, and instructions were somewhat later sent to the collectors of ports to prevent vessels from arming in favor of either of the belligerents.

The history of Genet's mission has been fully detailed

[a] Genet's Instructions, published Dec., 1793. V. Marsh., 336, *note*.

by Marshall, but a reference to these events has been deemed necessary, as their consequences long continued to operate, and as others will hereafter be narrated which took their origin from this direction of party spirit. To oppose its baneful influence was, throughout the remainder of this and the whole of the succeeding administration, the constant and most difficult task of the federalists. To warn the nation against its consequences, their ablest pens were exerted and their most brilliant eloquence awakened. It was the theme of the essays of Hamilton, the orations of Ames, and the last great charge of Washington.

The arrival of Genet was the signal for the organization in America of the Jacobin societies, whose machinations, during the succeeding year, were so injurious to its tranquillity. Their views of universal reformation, and their assumed dictation to government, were warmly supported by the swarms of foreigners who were now pouring into the United States; and as extremes meet, the subjects of monarchies furnished the best materials for republicans. Those who had never known liberty were the most fitted not only to enjoy, but to teach it. Now was the very carnival of democracy. It was to such a state of affairs that the words of Montesquieu applied with a singular force. "The corruption of each government," he says, "begins with that of the principles. The principle of democracy is corrupted not only when the spirit of equality is extinct, but likewise when they fall into a spirit of extreme equality, and when each citizen would fain be upon a level with those he has chosen to command him. Then the people, incapable of bearing the very power they have delegated, want to manage everything themselves, to debate for the senate, to execute for the magistrate, and to decide for the judges. Where this is the case, virtue can no longer subsist in the republic."

As the Executive was found to be impracticable, Genet, in accordance with his instructions, turned to the people.

His letters to the department of state, written for the purpose of publication, and immediately sent to the Jacobin papers, breathed defiance and insult to the government, sympathy and affection for the oppressed and injured nation. Pursuing his design of involving the country in the war, he persisted, notwithstanding remonstrance and prohibition, in arming vessels and making captures in the waters of the United States; his consuls following his example, openly disobeyed and resisted the laws. Expeditions were fitted out for military operation against Florida and Louisiana, and, as if the usurpation of the rights of sovereignty were not sufficient, a direct appeal from the President to the people was threatened. In all this he was not merely supported, but stimulated by the opposition. The clubs warmly espoused his cause, the anti-federal papers vindicated every new outrage, calumnies and abuse were heaped upon the administration from every quarter, and the menaced appeal was boldly invited. Yet these were the men who charged upon the Federalists a subserviency to foreign influence.

As it became manifest that a speedy termination must be put to this conduct, it was unanimously resolved by the cabinet, that Genet's recal should be required of his government, and a letter to that effect was written to Mr. Morris on the 16th of August, which recapitulated at length the offences of the minister. On the 18th of September, M. Genet addressed the Secretary of State, less in his own defence than in abuse of the President, and for the first time in their correspondence, of Mr. Jefferson himself. It had been not a little remarkable that during this period of high excitement, the Secretary of State, who it was supposed had concurred with the rest of the cabinet in the proclamation of neutrality, and most of the other measures actually adopted in reference to this new aspect of affairs, who had been the organ of all official correspondence with him, should not only have retained undiminished his

popularity with the opponents of those measures, but have hitherto escaped censure from the minister himself. Under the circumstances therefore, it is not wonderful that suspicions of his duplicity were entertained; and such suspicions were not likely to be removed by Genet's charge, that he had used to him "an official language, and a language confidential;" that he "made him believe he was his friend," and "initiated him into mysteries which had influenced his hatred against all those who aspired to absolute power"—in short, that he had been alike treacherous to his country and to his ally; that he had instigated Genet in his outrages, and abandoned him when he had reaped their advantage.

## TO NOAH WEBSTER.

PHILADELPHIA, May 20, 1793.

I have received your letter with the pamphlet, with the perusal of which I have been highly gratified. I must set you a task for writing another, on a subject more useful, important and honourable to our particular country, than any which can be the subject of human contemplation. I mean a philosophical, historical and political view of the manners, customs and institutions of New England. I wish the nature and effect of the civil and religious corporations to be considered, as they respect the order, information and social condition of the people; also as they afford a guaranty for republican systems, as they tend to restrain dangerous ambition, &c. I have not time now to explain myself fully, but I believe you understand me, as I think we have conversed on the subject. If you will undertake the work, I will thank you to make a brief, or argument of the subject, and send it to me, that I may suggest any additional ideas. A book of this kind, well written, is of the utmost consequence to explain to the people their situation, and to prevent them from adopting any novelties in this age of theory and nonsense. It is my sober opinion, that the hopes of mankind as they respect the eventual success of the republican system, depend chiefly on the conduct of the people of New England. Since I have left that country, I have become an enthusiast, if not a fanatic, with respect to the customs of the northern States. I send you a copy of some late papers, not that I wish to convince you that the treasury have been honest, but as they contain some details which may be of use to you in your speculations.

## TO FREDERICK WOLCOTT.

PHILA., May 20th, 1793.

* * * *

We are here considerably plagued with French politics. A party most intolerably demand, that the French shall be panegyrized and extolled for every thing which they have done, and that other nations shall be censured and reviled. Citizen Genet, the new minister, issued commissions to privateers at Charleston, which have captured several prizes. A British ship has been captured at anchor in the bay of Delaware. These infractions of our neutrality will, I presume, be censured by the government; they must be restrained in future, or this country will inevitably be dragged into the war, to the utter ruin of our affairs. It is painful to think that we have any such fools and rogues, as are disposed to bring on discussions, and excite parties, tending to irritate foreign nations and expose the public peace. There is no man in this country, I hope, who does not wish that the French should enjoy a free government. Many justly doubt whether their present measures tend to secure to them this great blessing; but in my opinion we ought not to discuss this subject too publicly. It is a matter with which we have nothing to do. We should preserve our own peace, and set an example of moderation to the world. It is certain that there is nothing for us to imitate on either side of the question. The despotic system of conquest and partition, and the French system of fraternizing, are equally oppressive and villainous. A friend of order, freedom and happiness, must equally hate the King of Prussia, the Empress of Russia, the German tyrants, and those infernal robbers, Marat, Egalité and Robespierre, who murder and destroy under the deluding pretences of being the friends of liberty and equality. The benevolent mind must contemplate the scenes of devastation occasioned by both parties, with the extremest anguish, and can find no solace but in the expectation that a just God will destroy both factions.

It must be the case that the confusions in Europe will continue for a long time. I therefore view the situation of this country as critical. May every patriot finally determine, that in all events it shall not be involved.

PHILA., June 11, 1793.

I have perfectly recovered from my indisposition, and wish that I could indulge myself on your hill in eating strawberries, and breathing the pure air of freedom. This cannot be permitted for the present; I must remain busily employed this summer. Until the present storm is blown over, it is necessary that all the seamen should stay with the ship.

You good people of New England ought to be proud of your situation. While the world is contending for and against liberty and equality, you can enjoy the blessings of peace, security and independence, and if you but preserve the old manners and institutions of your country, you will have the consolation of extending the happiness which they bestow, to every part of America. You may be assured that the success of the republican system in a great measure, depends on the conduct of the people of New England. * * *

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, June 11, 1793.

I have received your favour of the 31st ultimo, and was happy to be informed of the general prosperity and satisfaction which prevails in the State of Connecticut. It would be much increased if the people could compare their situation with that of any other. New England is the only truly republican country on earth, and the final success of the republican system depends upon their firmness, moderation and virtue. If the present storm in Europe is of short continuance, we shall avoid any trouble. If it continues long, especially attended with success to the exterminating spirit of the French, I tremble for the existence of all civilized societies. If this country suffers from no other cause, it will be embarrassed with obstinate and dangerous factions. At present, Europe is agitated with the most violent convulsions. Poland and France in different ways exhibit frightful examples of human misery. Several other governments appear to have no other option than to sink under the iron sceptre of despotism, or be depopulated by the poniards of enthusiastic demagogues. A wretched alternative for millions of peaceable and virtuous citizens.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, June 17th, 1793.

Sir,

* * * *

I have examined the statement of the Secretary of the Treasury which you sent me, and although I am not able to judge of this business in the detail, yet the energetic reasons which he has assigned for his own conduct, cannot, I believe, fail of making the most convincing impressions, and fix his adversaries in a state of despondence. I never had the least doubt, both as to the abilities and rectitude of Mr. Hamilton. Indeed a man must be uncommonly stupid, not to know that the national fiscal department must be conducted not only with regard to every species of property within the United States, but to the whole system of commerce, and whatever has the name of property, which can have any connection with this country. The man who can take so comprehensive a view, unaided by any former national experience, as to be able to establish a system of public credit after it was by abuse of all public faith and confidence nearly annihilated, so as within the short term of four years fully to restore and establish it upon a stable basis, and by his provident care to guard against all contingencies which might do it an injury, and by the same operation raise a people from the most torpid indolence and despondency, to a state of the most vigorous enterprise, industry and cheerfulness, and increase the value of property within the same period one third more than it before was, (which I believe has been the case within this state, notwithstanding our vast emigrations) he who can effect all this without imposing a sensible burden upon any one, or deranging one useful occupation or business, must possess talents and industry and a species of intuition, which will ever insure him respect and the highest esteem from all but such

only as are infected by that basest and vilest of human affections, envy. In this state I never heard any one speak of Mr. Hamilton but in terms of respect, and the same of the officers of his department. I shall furnish a number of gentlemen in this part of the state with the reading of the fiscal statement which you sent me, for although we are very quiet and confiding in the rectitude of the national administration ; yet there are some who wish to have it otherwise (or I am mistaken) if they dare make the attempt—at present they dare not.

I have observed that gentlemen who have been for some time in Philadelphia, seem to have very disagreeable apprehensions lest there should be some subversion of the national government. This I can more easily account for, as I never was six months in Philadelphia during the war, but what I had different apprehensions, and those very disagreeable ones, relative to the state of the Union, from what I had upon my return there after a few months absence ; and I always found that to be the case in regard to every other member of Congress. Indeed if they had not been frequently supplied with fresh hands, the condition of the members would have been intolerable. You will always judge right if you believe that the vast body of the people who live north and back of that place, are of emphatically different character from those who compose that factious, ignorant and turbulent town. I believe that there is not one in fifty in New England but what will support the present government, (in which computation I include Vermont, and also reckon Parson Niles and some hysterical politicians in Boston) and I believe that there is not more than one in twenty north of the Delaware ; Maryland, if I mistake not, will do the same. If at any future period our southern friends shall incline to dissolve the Union, they must count upon the Potomac and the Ohio, as the line of division. This part of the Union will not adopt the French ideas of jurisprudence. I believe before the year 1800, Congress will be very willing to go to Conogochegue, or any other place, so as they can leave Philadelphia ; not but that one half of the bustle and turbulence of that town is a mere matter of affectation and pride, and more owing to habitual security than any serious wish to obtain what they seem to aim at.

The French are in a state of extreme delirium and extreme wretchedness. They will suffer all the miseries which war can inflict, and in its consequences, probably, famine and the pestilence. The avowed designs of the late European Congress to give France a king, will occasion serious reflection in the minds of millions of the Old World. The combinations of kings to maintain despotism through Europe, is a question which will, within no distant period, be further discussed in the old world.

When I sat down to write, I did not think of scribbling so long a letter, but you will take it as it is My kindest regards to your wife and yourself.

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, July 11, 1793.

Nothing material has lately occurred, except the destruction of the populous and opulent settlement of Cape François, which is mentioned in the enclosed pa-

pers. It is said that this town was as large as New York, and more populous. All the whites who did not escape on board the vessels are supposed to have been exterminated, and the same destruction will probably extend to Port au Prince and the other towns in the French part of Saint Domingo. American property to a great amount has been lost, besides the loss of a valuable market. The wretched remains of the whites are daily falling in here, and into the Chesapeake, most of whom are in a deplorable state of poverty, and for whose subsistence immediate provision will be necessary.

It is not known that anything important had happened in Europe, till about the beginning of May, at which time some considerable actions had happened, the result of which has been but incorrectly detailed. The acquittal of Marat is viewed by many here as the prelude to some new disorders in Paris. The affairs of our own country are prosperous, but I tremble for the consequences of the party-spirit which begins to appear. There seems to be some danger that French and English factions will disturb our tranquillity. A large privateer has actually fitted out from Philadelphia, under the French minister's directions, and sailed down the river. No satisfactory promise can be obtained that she will not proceed to sea. This, of course, has occasioned much dispute, and parties appear to be forming. It is a time for the exercise of firmness and moderation on the part of all good citizens.

## TO NOAH WEBSTER.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 10, 1793.

I perused your favor of the 5th instant, with sincere pleasure. The contents and enclosure shall be used to promote the purpose you mention. It must be very consoling to the President to know that the measures which he has adopted at this interesting crisis are approved by the discerning republicans of the country. The sentiments of the people of Connecticut, you may be assured, are as much regarded as any that can be offered. The city address was exactly to the purpose, and will have a good effect here. It was fortunate that it contained an intimation that you would resist a foreign influence. I expect soon to have the pleasure of transmitting an answer.

You are, I presume, informed of the audacious conduct of a foreign minister, if not, certain papers which have been published in New York by Citizen Willcocks, will convey a tolerable idea of it, though the offence has been incomparably more aggravated than he has represented. On this occasion I hope to see the proud and indignant spirit of our country awakened. Let it be known that we can distinguish between an individual and a cause; that we are competent to manage our own concerns, and that a foreign influence will not be permitted. As this is the first attempt of the kind which has been made, it is important that it should have such an issue as will render another improbable. Imagination cannot conceive a more wretched scene than this country would exhibit, if faction should arrange us under various interfering foreign interests; every species of villainy and corruption would be triumphant; even the hell of despotism

would be a refuge from such a situation. It is fortunate that great abilities are rarely united to great depravity. In the present instance, America is to be congratulated that she can obtain from the presumption and vanity of Citizen Genet, what she had a right to claim from his justice. By foolishly attempting to dictate, his personal consequence will be annihilated, and the country left calmly to fulfil its engagements, and at the same time avoid the horrors of war and internal disturbance. On this, as on all trying occasions, the friends of true liberty look to New England for protection. On your firmness and stability of character, the fortunes of this country in a great measure depend.

Though I have no objections that what I have now stated should be known to our particular friends, yet you will be pleased to consider this letter as chiefly confidential. It will, however, be proper that the people should understand it to be a real fact that M. Genet has insulted the government and behaved very imprudently. The consequences of a foreign influence in popular governments, may be elucidated from the history of ancient Greece and modern Italy, as well as from their more recent effects on the governments of Sweden and Poland.

## FROM DR. LEMUEL HOPKINS.

HARTFORD, Aug. 21, 1793.

My Dear Friend,

When you wrote me, the severe trial of some of the heads of departments was a recent event. You gave your opinion in favour of the several officers who conduct them having discharged their trust with zeal and foresight, even without excepting the war department which was then the most unpopular. I am glad to find that the public is now of the same opinion, and particularly that Col. Hamilton has been rather benefited than hurt by the loud clamor of the southern junto. Indeed, I could never bring myself to *fear* that they could eventually hurt the treasury department, and as to their being able to render the President unpopular, I am surprised that they should be so stupid, however chagrined and wrong-headed they might be, as to think it worth attempting. I am sure it requires no uncommon knowledge of men and measures to foresee, that in spite of all the fog of newspaper scribbling, the accessory aid of French politics, and the several difficulties of making our new government walk alone, the attachment of the people to him would decidedly appear whenever an event like that of his proclamation and the abuse which that drew upon him should occasion them to utter their sentiments. The leaders of that junto seem not only to think themselves "Legion," individually, but that each of their party is so too. I have no doubt but French gold has been scattered in some of our cities. It may have stimulated many a pen, and have made several presses groan in the anti-federal cause. Genet, too, may have thought that he was to be the great apostle of *genuine liberty and equality* to these states. That he could easily denounce the President by an "appeal" from his judgment on any considerable matter, and that the mob would fall on and effect his wishes; but they have to learn that money must be scattered among the whole body of the people; that a man bred in France must long study our character before he fully knows how widely we

differ from Frenchmen. All this, and much more must they learn, before they can make us adopt Jacobin politics, as a people. The southern democrats appear in newspapers, in speeches in Congress, &c., to come much nearer effecting their measures than is really the case. It never was, nor can be, that the measures of such men should be popular in New England. There is no such thing as *knowing* such a people as the New Englanders, so as to calculate crooked politics to their taste, without living among them from early youth. Harangues, ever so well peppered with "well born," "monocrats," "aristocrats," "hell of monarchy," &c. &c., are so far from really affecting anything in these parts, that whenever the still thinking part of the community can be brought to manifest their minds on any measures of consequence, they will at once drown a din of complaining politics which of itself would seem formidable. The more a man is among all sorts of people, the more fully will he learn the unmeasured difference there is between the sentiment of newspapers, replete with local politics, and the opinions of an enlightened people in the peaceable and successful pursuit of wealth and happiness. I find more and more, that a busy set of wrongheads can at pleasure, stir up for a time, any sentiments they please in cities, and that there is a great aptitude in most men to consider cities as worlds, or at least as the manufactories of sentiments for whole countries, and much of this may be true in the old world; but in New England the contrary is, and ever will be true as long as our schools, presses and town corporations last. The prompt, highflying addresses of Genet, the bankrupts of the ancient dominion who would still keep up the splendid exterior of their European ancestors, the insinuating acts of French ministers which, often outweighed in the end the martial roar of the British lion—all these, equally with the tag rag and bobtail of cities, must give way to such a new order of things as exists in the Northern States. It will take the nations, successively, a long time to find out what the matter is, and whenever they come to find out, 'tis too late. This was the case ever with mother Britain, will be more highly so with France, and so on of the rest.

Dear friend, farewell.

L. HOPKINS.

## FROM THEODORE SEDGWICK.

STOCKBRIDGE, 26th Aug., 1793.

My Dear Sir,

I believe I shall not impose on you an unpleasing task by subjecting you to the trouble of reading the inclosed. The sentiments it expresses were very popular here.

Mr. ———, you know, is elected. His conduct may be the result of the manner in which he is received at Philadelphia. He now, I am told, professes himself federal. Neglect will not, I hope, make him otherwise. I wish it may be in my power to attend the next session, though at present it is doubtful. Mrs. Sedgwick, I have reason to hope, is recovering. Should my hope not be disappointed, I shall attend my duty in Congress; but should her present deplorable state be continued, it will not be in my power.

Pray, is the report of the commissioners on the public accounts a secret? If not, you will gratify me greatly by informing me of the result. The people here are contented and happy. The few efforts which are made to disturb the public tranquillity have hitherto been ineffectual. Present my respects, and, if you will permit it, my affectionate regards to Mrs. Wolcott, and be assured that I am, dear sir, with much esteem, your most ob't serv't and sincere friend,

THEODORE SEDGWICK.

## FROM TIMOTHY DWIGHT.

1793.

Dear Sir,

Allow me, without detailing apologies for my apparent negligence in so long delaying this letter, to thank you, with much affection, for the uniform sincerity and hospitality which I found at your house. Assure Mrs. Wolcott of the grateful sense I shall ever entertain of the very polite and friendly manner in which she rendered my residence there peculiarly agreeable, and of my best wishes for your united happiness. Should your affairs allow, you would add much to our little circle of enjoyments by giving us a visit in your next Connecticut tour. Mrs. Dwight, I need not tell you, very sincerely joins with me in every wish of this nature. I was, on many accounts, greatly pleased with my journey to Philadelphia. The industry, thrift, and improvements of that city would be gratifying to a person much less interested in things of this nature. But nothing gave me a more sincere satisfaction than the present establishment of your prison. The state of Connecticut has gone no small length towards meliorating the condition of criminals, but is wholly eclipsed by the wisdom and humanity conspicuous in the treatment of these unhappy creatures I find in Philadelphia. To see a collection of people convicted of high trespasses against society and moral obligation after such conviction, orderly, peaceable, industrious, pleased with attending religious worship, and with reading the bible and other religious books; to see them all fed and clad by their own industry, instructed and reformed in sentiments and conduct, uttering neither profane nor indecent expressions, and without the use of severity, either in word or action, induced from the influence of a regular train of benevolent and equitable treatment, to prepare for reädmission to the esteem and blessing of civilized society, and finally to see them obtaining such a privilege, is more than I ever expected, sanguine as I have generally been in the belief of practical improvement in social well being. In this great and difficult branch of such improvement, your fellow citizens have set an example to the whole human race, and from the success which has followed their efforts have encouragement to extend still further the same generous views of amending the character and condition of man.

I beg you to present my respectful compliments to Mr. Lowndes, and to tell him I shall always remember with peculiar pleasure the interview I had with him, and that, in my opinion at least, he and his brethren, the Friends, in Philadelphia, merit the utmost respect and good will of all the friends of mankind, for their many generous and well directed exertions in the cause of humanity. All

persons of understanding, and indeed all others, throughout New England, wholly approve of the President's timely and judicious proclamation, and of the various measures by which he has endeavoured to preserve a strict neutrality towards the belligerent powers on the part of the United States. When his communications to the Governor of this state were read before the legislature, at their last session, they were received with a high and universal approbation.

Nor was the decision manifested by the President less approved than the nature of his communications. Here a government without energy is laughed at, even by those whom the public would most suspect of a tendency to licentiousness. The effects of the general government on industry, morals, and happiness, are too great not to be clearly seen by the most careless observer, and too pleasing not to be strenuously retained by the most humble possessor. Hence every attempt to weaken its measures is considered with jealousy and dislike. The late very impertinent attacks on the first magistrate, are viewed with a general and marked indignation. Freneau, your printer, linguist, &c., is regarded here as a mere incendiary, or rather as a despicable tool of bigger incendiaries, and his paper as a public nuisance. Happily for the community, all the writers on this side of the question, whose productions I have seen, take effectual pains to disappoint themselves. For the violence of their prejudices, the weakness of their arguments, and the indecency of their sentiments, alike counteract the mischievousness of their designs. Mr. ——— is elected for the county of Hampshire. You are high in his esteem, and, I am told by good authority, can do much towards setting him right. A word, &c.

Our season is fine and fruitful, and is a beautiful symbol of general prosperity. Were we fairly freed from Indian troubles, we should have nothing to regret. A war with Great Britain, we, at least, in New England, will not enter into. Sooner would ninety-nine out of a hundred of our inhabitants separate from the Union, than plunge themselves into such an abyss of misery. Greenfield Hill is at present in a dormant state, and must continue so until October—other unexpected business having demanded my attention. With sentiments of sincere respect and affection, I am, dear sir, &c., your friend and servant,

TIMOTHY DWIGHT.

Some of the following letters refer to the first malignant fever in Philadelphia. Its effects were extremely fatal; the officers of government were dispersed, and Washington even deliberated upon the propriety of convening Congress elsewhere. The abatement of the fever, however, rendered unnecessary a measure not believed to be in strict accordance with the constitution. Provision for such a contingency was made by an act of the succeeding session.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., Aug. 30, 1793.

* * * *

I have lately been vexed at reading the papers in this city, which have excited a general alarm in respect to a putrid fever now prevailing here. The effects already experienced in our markets are disagreeable. The alarm of the citizens and their friends in the country, has, to my judgment, been injudiciously excited. As I know the report will reach you much exaggerated, I think it necessary to state the facts as they have come to my knowledge. It is true that a malignant putrid fever has appeared in some parts of Water street, which is, partly from necessity and partly from carelessness, exceedingly filthy. It was brought from the West Indies, or has been produced by putrid coffee which was exposed on one of the wharves; it is not settled, however, which was its true origin. The disorder has not yet been treated with much success, and individuals who become infected in Water street have spread it into other parts. It seems, however, to be chiefly restricted to those who live in confined places, or who have by accident or imprudence received the contagion. Those who are temperate, who live cleanly and generously, have hitherto escaped, and though the citizens are much alarmed and though the consequences cannot be foreseen, I feel no apprehension of danger, and wish my friends neither to believe nor be concerned at the reports which are and will be circulated.

## TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

PHILA., Sept. 5th, 1793.

I have been favored with your letter of August 28th, and have received much pleasure from perusing my friend Lee's oration. The late manifestations of the public sentiment in regard to certain interesting questions, are highly honorable to our country, and will serve to rescue republicanism from that opprobrium which the demoniacs of France have cast upon it. They also prove that there is a fund of good sense in this country, upon which those who administer the public affairs may safely rely; that the giddy politicks of our great towns are not to be regarded; in fine, that we have no Paris—the centre of vice, folly and faction—to dictate public opinions, and overawe those who execute the laws. The people of this country are too wise to suffer either kings or clubs to rule over them. There has, however, been a time during the present summer which justified a degree of apprehension; as men of all ages have been subject to epidemical phrenzies, it could not certainly be foretold that the exertions which were made to delude would prove unsuccessful. The danger is now past, and much credit is due to the correct and manly conduct of the people.

The intimation in respect to your new member will be attended to. We were formerly intimately acquainted, and I had reason, from what then appeared, to value his friendship. It will be a matter of course that it be renewed, if he should

manifest a disposition on his part, which I can have no reason to doubt. The report of the commissioners is not made public. I have spoken to the Secretary on the subject, and I believe that he will soon communicate it to the State executives. Permit me to sympathize in your affliction on account of Mrs. Sedgwick's indisposition, and to express earnest hopes for her speedy recovery. A malignant fever has raged in this place for several weeks, which has greatly alarmed the citizens, and induced numbers to fly into the country. My situation, of necessity, confines me here. I have yet been well, and hope to continue so.

Late arrivals from Europe have informed us of the wretched situation of things in France, which seem to be progressing from bad to worse. There is danger that famine and its attendant pestilence, will complete the ruin of that devoted country. A constitution has been published; but it only proves that the convention are either fools or under violent restraints, for no body of men, however peaceable, could possibly execute it for a single month. France must be considered as ruined for the present age; perhaps other nations may be involved in a similar destruction.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., Sept. 6, 1793.

I wrote you a line, a few days since, respecting a fever which prevails in this city. It still continues, though its malignity is said to have in some degree abated. Great numbers have left the city, and all the villages in the vicinity are full. My business is in such a situation, that if the danger shall increase I shall be able in about ten days to spend a fortnight in the country, or go on to New York. At present, it is impossible; nor do I think it at all necessary, as my house is both airy and in a quarter where the disease has not yet appeared. I mention these things to prevent any unnecessary anxiety about us. We are yet well, and hope to continue so.

We have no news except what you have by this time probably heard. Condé is taken; the Austrians, &c., are slowly progressing against France, though it is said the combined armies begin to want forage. In France, every thing is as bad as possible; civil war rages, famine and her attendant, pestilence, may be soon expected to complete the ruin of that devoted country. The cool, cruel policy of the British has destroyed the French West Indies by means of their internal factions.

Our commissioners have not been able to effect a meeting with the Indians, unless by stipulating for the Ohio as the boundary. The war, therefore, will be renewed. This was, doubtless, in a great measure owing to British influence. The Spaniards are suspected of similar management with the Southern Indians. On these points, however, I do not wish my name mentioned, though the facts ought to be known. The effect they ought to produce on the people, should be to make them watchful in respect to foreign interest, and firm and united in support of their own. The world is envious of the prosperity of the United States,

and the European governments have been too long in habits of injustice not to injure us. I wish we could agree to be united, and to hate and despise them as they all deserve.

PHILA., Sept. 12, 1793.

I have judged it best to remove Mrs. Wolcott, her little sister, and a part of our domestics, into the country, where I shall soon follow them. * * * The apprehensions of the citizens cannot be increased; business is in a great measure abandoned; the true character of man is disclosed, and he shows himself a weak, timid, desponding and selfish being. One half of the risques which are incurred in the gratification of idle curiosity, or in the practice of the most degrading fanaticism, would administer relief to numbers who perish without notice or the least assistance from their friends. The Africans are said not to be affected, and, much to their honour, they have zealously contributed every aid in their power. Sunday and Monday of this week have proved the most mortal; since, the disorder is said to have abated. It is very certain that it is communicated only by contact, or by specific contagion. The fever has not, except in one or two instances, appeared in the quarter where I live, and my situation is as favourable as almost any in the city. When I leave the city, I expect not to be permitted to return—the alarm of the country being so great as to restrain much intercourse. If you should not hear from me, you will not, therefore, be alarmed. Col. Hamilton lives about two miles out of the city, and by entering the house of a sick person caught the fever. He was violently attacked; but by a proper treatment, which few have had the good fortune to experience, he is believed to be out of danger. I am the better satisfied with being in town, as, by information from his servants, I can render him some services without risque to myself. I have every motive to induce caution, and feel no apprehension. I hope none will be experienced by my friends, as it can render me no service.

SMITH'S HOUSE, NEAR PHILA., Oct. 10th, 1793.

I have heard nothing from you for some time; but this I impute to an intimation in one of my letters that I was about to leave Philadelphia, or to the miscarriage of some that were subsequently written. The dreadful sickness in the city continues to occupy our chief attention. Its ravages are extending, with added circumstances of terror and distress; many now die without attendance. The kind attentions, the tears of condolence and sympathy, which alleviate pain and in some degree, reconcile the dying to their fate, are frequently omitted by the nearest friends and relatives. When generously bestowed, they are too often the price of life. * * *

Unless the disease shall speedily abate, it will be utterly impracticable to attend to the public business in Pennsylvania. In any event, the disorder which commerce will experience in this quarter, must be considered as a national misfortune.

SMITH'S HOUSE, Oct. 17, 1793.

Since I wrote last, we have had some rain and cool weather. The effects are already very beneficial; the mortality has greatly abated, and but few, comparatively, are taken sick. May God grant a speedy relief from the dreadful scourge with which we have been afflicted. * * *

Perhaps the New York papers may fall in your way, in which is contained an address of A. G. Frauncis to the people, containing an attack upon the Secretary of the Treasury and insinuations which may affect me. You may be assured and may assert on my credit, if the subject is mentioned, that Frauncis is a villain—that his claim is a fraudulent one—that the whole affair proceeds from party enmity and disappointed avarice—and that when the matter is understood, as it will be, by the public, it will appear that the Treasury have conducted with propriety, and that they have the merit, if performing a duty can be called merit, of resisting a deliberate fraud upon the public.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT.

MOUNT VERNON, 14th Oct., 1793.

Sir,

Lest my last letter to Col. Hamilton should have met some mischance, I send a duplicate and request your care of it—the necessity for the heads of departments assembling by the first of next month, becoming more and more apparent. Philadelphia or vicinity is appointed for this purpose, where I shall be myself.

Let me know I pray you, whether the malady with which Philadelphia is afflicted, has extended to Germantown or neighbourhood. In a word, I would thank you for precise information on this head, for I have not been able to get any. A letter requiring this of the Attorney General is, I presume, still lying in the post office, as I have received no acknowledgment of it, although written and sent from this, the 30th of last month.

On the supposition that the fever in Philadelphia will not have entirely ceased, and the city sufficiently purified by the first of December, for Congress to assemble therein, what conveniencies would Germantown afford for this purpose? thereby superseding the necessity of removing the public offices to a more distant part. If this also should be conceived an unsafe, or an improper place, what other is contemplated for the residence of Congress next session? Such information of the prevailing sense of those who are best acquainted with the true situation of things in and about Philadelphia, would be very satisfactory to me, as our accounts here are so vague and contradictory, that we know not what to rely on.

The report is, that Mr. Willing, President of the Bank, Mr. John Ross, Mr. Jonathan Sergeant, Mr. Howell, Col. Franks, and many others of our acquaintances have fallen victims to the prevailing malignant fever; that near 4000 have died, and that the disorder rages more violently than ever. Are these things true? I

hope you and Mrs. Wolcott keep your health. With esteem and regard, I am, sir, your very humble servant,

GO: WASHINGTON.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

Smith's House, Oct. 20, 1793.

On the evening of the 17th, I had the honour of receiving your letter of the 14th instant, and have lost no time in obtaining the best information in my power on the several questions therein stated.

The malady with which the city is affected, has been progressive from the time of your departure, until Monday the 14th instant, at which time it had extended nearly through the city. Several small remissions have been observed during that period, all of which were confined to cool days when the wind was in the western quarter; whenever the wind had shifted towards the south, the number of the sick and the mortality have invariably increased. On Monday there was a slight fall of rain, which was succeeded by cool days and several frosty nights; the mortality of course diminished, and but few comparatively fell sick; the last days have been more warm, and the unfavourable effects are at present increasing.

From repeated observations, it may be certainly inferred, that the cause of the malady still exists; that its activity is increased by heat, and diminished by cold, and the city will not be purified and rendered safe until after heavy rains or severe frosts. It was lately Dr. Rush's opinion, that the disorder was more violent and more fatal, than at the time of its first appearance in the city. Nothing certain is known of the number of victims; for some time information on this point was carefully concealed, but from data which cannot be very erroneous, I judge that more than 4000 persons have died.

Mr. Willing was for some time sick, but has recovered; Mr. John Ross has resided in the country, and is I presume well. Mr. Sergeant and Col. Franks are dead; several gentlemen of the name of Howell have fallen victims, and among them a relation of Mr. Rawle, who was much esteemed. The accountant of the war department has been indisposed, but he has recovered, and is now in the country.

There is no point on which the public opinion is more unsettled, than in respect to the degree of danger which attends any given position in the vicinity of Philadelphia. It is certain that some gentlemen of good sense, and those not deficient in firmness on ordinary occasions, have removed from the villages and estates in the neighborhood of the city, to more interior situations; a greater number who have not removed remain at home completely insulated from society.

I have regularly obtained information of the state of the city and the neighbouring places, and it is my opinion, that the disorder is generally, if not solely communicated by contagion, that its ravages have been confined to no age, sex,

or temperament, and that it has affected those classes of citizens most extensively, who have been most exposed to intercourse with each other. Six clerks in the treasury department, seven persons employed by the collectors of the customs, several clerks in the different banks, and three persons in the post office, have fallen victims. Several others have been affected who have recovered, being in the whole a very great proportion of all those who have been exposed. A number of persons belonging to, or residing in the country, have contracted the disorder by occasional visits to the city. Mr. Powell doubtless lost his life in consequence of a humane visit to his house in town, to provide for the accommodation of a favourite servant; the malady moreover appears to be contagious by being constantly observed to extend and diverge from infected places; though it is now spread nearly through the city, yet there are some neighbourhoods in which it has not yet appeared.

There has all along been a considerable diversity of opinion in respect to the cause, nature, and manner of communicating the malady. Some have supposed that it was generated in the city—certain facts however have been recently stated to me, by men of indisputable honour, which leave no doubt in my mind that it was introduced by an American vessel, with French passengers and property from Hispaniola; it has also been asserted on respectable authority, that there has been no instance of the disorder being communicated to any person who has resided out of the city. I must however however admit, that of the numbers who have died in the villages and places adjacent to the city, I have known of no instance where the person affected had not visited the city. If the observation should be found true in the latitude it has been made, it will militate with the opinion I have advanced, and go far to prove that a residence near the city, admitting the malady to continue, would be safe.

The Philadelphians will not abandon their present expectation, that the city will be purified and safe before the meeting of Congress, without painful reluctance. In that event, it would be their wish, and that of the people adjacent, that Congress should convene as near as possible to the city. Lancaster, Wilmington and Germantown have been mentioned. It is supposed that the latter place would under all circumstances, afford the best accommodations. I have made full enquiry, and entertain no doubt that the town is free from contagion; it is certain that at present, not an individual is affected with the prevailing malady. I have conversed with a magistrate of the town, and am informed by him and other persons, that if events render it necessary, every exertion will be made to accommodate Congress and the public offices. The school house with the adjoining buildings, may in my opinion, at a small expense, be altered and fitted up so as to afford tolerable accommodations for the two houses of Congress, and their immediate officers.

I have called at the house of the Attorney General, near Germantown, and was informed that he was at Lancaster, but was expected soon to return. It was suggested that your letter had been received, and that measures had been taken for engaging a house, but the result was not known.

Col. Hamilton is in New Jersey on his way to this place. I shall therefore retain the letter for him. General Knox is, I presume, at Boston; to which place

I shall address the letter transmitted to me by Mr. Dandridge, which has just been received.

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

NEW HAVEN, Oct. 30, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

I have received much satisfaction from a short acquaintance with Mr. Smith and Mr. Irwine; the latter went the last week for Boston, the former has for several days been a steady attendant on the Legislature, and I hope, though he has witnessed many uncouth things, yet on the whole he will not receive unfavourable impressions of Connecticut. The Assembly will close their sessions to-morrow; the only things we have done of consequence for you to know, are the appointment of Mr. Mitchell to be Senator, and a resolution to forward an amendment of the Constitution, in respect to the suability of a State; on the last question there is a great unanimity of sentiment. It will be a happy circumstance if irritative measures, which are not immediately necessary, can be avoided; most danger is to be apprehended from the judiciary; the people are in good humour.

I should have been gratified by your father's election into the House; some of his friends imagined it not best for him, and most were scrupulous of alteration as to the first two officers of government, so that on the election he did not find any considerable support. I forgot to mention, Mr. Ingersoll declines a seat in Congress, and a new nomination is directed to take place the 4th of Nov., and the choice of two representatives in Congress, the 25th; the candiates are Mr. James Davenport, Joshua Coit and Zephaniah Swift; we have not any certain means of calculation of the event. Among other bills we have passed, one is a resolve for appropriating the avails of our western territory to the societies of all denominations for the support of their clergy and schools. This bill occasions some heat, and probably will more. I was convinced so many combinations, in respect to the money we may at some future period have for this land [would take place] that an appropriation to any general object could not hereafter be expected, and none pleased me better than the two above mentioned.

We feel an interest to have Congress sit in New York, if there be a necessity of quitting Philadelphia, we wish no such necessity may exist, and that the sickness may continue to abate. I am most affectionately your friend,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

FALLS OF SCHUYLKILL, Oct. 21st, 1793.

* * * *

The state of the public business is such as to require immediate attention, and is so circumstanced that it cannot be neglected. What will be our situation for the winter is uncertain. The President has summoned the heads of departments to meet at Germantown, on the 1st of November, when something will be deter-

mined. Perhaps then I may stand in need of your kind offer for Mrs. Wolcott, in case we cannot meet in Philadelphia. I shall inform you of what is concluded on, and what may be necessary in respect to ourselves in consequence.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 10, 1793.

I have received your favour of the 28th, and am happy to inform you that the sickness has ceased, and that I have removed to town. The few convalescent patients who remain cannot I think endanger the general health.

* * * *

I should be glad to know what sober men think and expect, in regard to the French minister. By a letter to the contributors for the St. Domingo sufferers, it seems that he is engaging people in this country in the public service of France. This insolence is insufferable, and I fear it will do us harm unless it is properly noticed. All depends in such cases upon the public sentiment, and it is interesting to be well informed on the subject.

# CHAPTER V.

## THIRD CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION.

The anti-federalists had, by aid of the influences above detailed, obtained for the first time a majority of the house. Mr. Muhlenberg, who had been Speaker during the first Congress, was elected by ten votes over the federal candidate, Mr. Sedgwick. The Senate was about equally divided, the casting vote of the Vice-President generally deciding the more important questions.

The policy to be pursued by the federal government in regard to the new condition of affairs in Europe, had been settled during the summer upon broad and well-considered principles; but the preservation of its peace is not always in the power of a nation, and the condition of our foreign relations, owing to the conduct of other governments, was critical. No settlement had been effected of the vexed questions with Great Britain arising from the treaty of peace; no commercial arrangements had been concluded; the impressment of our seamen continued; the negociations between the Secretary of State and her Minister had produced nothing but irritation; in addition, she was suspected of exciting the hostility of the northern Indians, and of fomenting the difficulties with Spain. The French republic, besides intriguing through her Minister to draw the United States into the war, had, in direct contravention of her treaty, authorized the arrest of neutral vessels laden with enemies' goods, or with provisions destined for an enemy's

port, and Great Britain had retorted with a similar order. Systematic depredations under both, had commenced on our trade. The Spanish government resisted our claims to the navigation of the Mississippi, and, emboldened by its alliance with England, assumed an attitude of dictation and defiance towards the United States. Through its agency, the tribes of the southern frontier menaced with devastation that extremity of the country.

To add to these sources of difficulty, the Algerines had commenced anew an active warfare upon our commerce in the Mediterranean, and had consigned the crews of the captured vessels to slavery. In this, Great Britain was likewise suspected of bearing a part. On the conclusion of a peace between Algiers and her ally, Portugal, she had withdrawn a fleet which had for some time restrained the depredations of the corsairs, and the capture of our vessels which followed as a consequence, was looked upon as a motive. The suspicion, though probably unjust, had much weight in the then doubtful position of the two countries.

The internal peace of the Union was scarcely less precarious than its foreign relations. The insidious conduct of France had been calculated to throw the odium of her own acts upon the policy of the federal government. Its partisans in the west attributed to the administration the vexations which former French intrigues had entailed upon them. Expeditions under the authority of Genet, were preparing to obtain by force, those advantages which, while Spain was an ally of France, they had united in denying to America, and which were now to be conquered by American arms, not for herself but for others; the discontent at the revenue laws was ripening into resistance in Pennsylvania; the Jacobin clubs were everywhere busy in creating sedition. Under this state of things Congress met, and its complexion was little calculated to excite confidence or hope. Washington, in his speech,

which was delivered on the 3d of December, referred to the events of the summer, and urged that immediate provision be made for the protection of the country. A message of the 5th, transmitted the documents relative both to France and England.

In discussing the answer to the speech, no open attempt was made to justify the conduct of the French Minister or to censure the measures of the President. "An attack on the administration," says Chief-Justice Marshall, "could be placed on no ground more disadvantageous than on its controversy with M. Genet;" and the subsequent course of the opposition showed that this was at least the main cause of their forbearance. In all the debates of the session, an extraordinary sensitiveness for the honor of France was exhibited. Every imputation upon her principles or conduct was visited with an unaccountable promptness of indignation; a disposition to sacrifice even the best interests of America to her wishes, showed itself to a degree that would have seemed the height of romantic gratitude to those who knew not its motive; the anti-federalists appeared to have forgotten that they had a country of their own, so wrapped were they in solicitude for the welfare of the new republic. The federalists were overwhelmed with reproaches and charges of attachment to England; the causes of complaint against Great Britain were made the daily topic of excited denunciation; while the flagrant violations of treaty, and the open depredations upon our commerce by France, were passed over in silence, or treated as the natural results of the conduct of her enemies. Yet the government which thus enlisted the sympathies of the people, and was thus defended by their representatives, was that of Robespierre; it was the REIGN OF TERROR which formed to the anti-federalists the beau ideal of a republic! And men here, patriots and republicans by excellence, were found daring enough to hold up this Juggernaut to public wor-

ship, and with the same ease with which they had transferred their idolatry from Louis XVI. to his executioners, that public now bowed down to *their* murderers, to Robespierre and the revolutionary tribunal.

The principal topic of the session was Mr. Jefferson's report upon "the privileges, and restrictions on the commerce of the United States, in foreign countries." This document had been called for so early as February, 1791, at a time when the state of Europe and the relations of the United States were essentially different, when no war existed between France and Great Britain, no negociations were pending between the latter country and our own, and no aggressions had been made by the former upon our domestic peace. When, after the lapse of nearly three years, it was at length produced, such egregious errors were detected that a supplementary report became necessary. Accuracy, had not, indeed, been its object. The report was designed to support a system of discriminating duties, in which the importation of French, was to be encouraged at the expense of British products and manufactures. It had been, in every line, studiously framed to misrepresent the commercial regulations of Great Britain, and to color favorably those of France; to add to the feeling in favor of the one, and to increase the hostility against the other. It was kept back until an opportunity offered of using it with effect, and this session, convened amidst unparalleled excitement, when national sympathy and national hatred were at their utmost height, was deemed a fitting occasion. It is worth remarking that Mr. Jefferson, in this last act of his secretaryship, besides distorting facts, advocated a principle which, in common with his adherents at the south, he had hitherto repudiated, that of protection to manufactures by means of duties. His object in maintaining this policy at present, was unquestionably the same which dictated his system of discriminating duties. Thus, although a protective

tariff, when simply for the interest of American manufacturers, had been opposed; protection, when favoring party views, could be readily supported. There has been a favorite maxim of Mr. Jefferson's followers, that "principles never change." The more correct reading would seem to have been, that "circumstances alter cases." The principles of Mr. Jefferson's report were embodied in a series of resolutions introduced by Mr. Madison. Upon these ensued a debate, which continued with intervals through a great part of the session, and in which, the strength and recklessness of the French party were alike shown. The proposed system, however, eventually failed of adoption.

Soon after the presentation of his report, Mr. Jefferson resigned his office. He was succeeded, on the 2d of January, by Mr. Randolph; and William Bradford, of Pennsylvania, was, on the 27th, appointed Attorney-General in place of the latter. Touching the appointment of Mr. Randolph, a circumstance is narrated in Jefferson's "Ana" which is interesting in connection with the subsequent history of that officer. Washington had consulted Jefferson as to his successor. He says: "I asked him whether some person could not take my office *ad interim*, till he should make an appointment; as Mr. Randolph for instance. 'Yes,' says he, 'but then you would raise the expectation of keeping it, and I do not know that he is fit for it, nor what is thought of Mr. Randolph.' I avoided noticing the last observation, and he put the question to me directly. I then told him I went into society so little as to be unable to answer it. I KNEW THAT THE EMBARRASSMENTS IN HIS PRIVATE AFFAIRS HAD OBLIGED HIM TO USE EXPEDIENTS WHICH HAD INJURED HIM WITH THE MERCHANTS AND SHOPKEEPERS, AND AFFECTED HIS CHARACTER FOR INDEPENDENCE; THAT THESE EMBARRASSMENTS WERE SERIOUS, AND NOT LIKELY TO CEASE SOON."[a]

[a] IV. Jeff. Wri., 494, "Ana."

Somewhat in contrast with this delicacy was his candor in respect to the merits of another person named. It appears that Washington had Wolcott in view among the persons upon whom the office of Secretary of State might be conferred. Mr. Jefferson says "He asked me what sort of a man Mr. Wolcott was. I told him I knew nothing of him myself. I had heard him characterized as a cunning man."[a] Judging from his subsequent appointments to a more responsible office, this hearsay slander had not much weight with Washington. Nothing could in fact be more unjust. The last quality of Wolcott's mind was "cunning."

An extract from a paper, written by the latter some years after, gives the reverse of the picture in his opinion of Mr. Jefferson.

"The flexibility of Mr. Jefferson's principles, and his intimate acquaintance with the factious chiefs and instigators of the French Revolution, designated him as the leader of a party at an early period; and it is but just to admit that until his elevation to the Presidency, few men ever practised the arts of political chicanery with greater address and perseverance. The articles of confederation had become altogether inefficient, and Mr. Jefferson in common with most of his countrymen admitted the necessity of invigorating the ties of national union. He however disapproved of several important provisions of the constitution proposed in 1787, but at the same time accompanied his opposition with such circumstances of doubt and equivocation, as exempted him from the then unpopular imputations of being an anti-federalist. In the office of Secretary of State he was distinguished for an attention to all those trifles which attend the minds of half learned, dreaming politicians and superficial scholars; and by those acts became the idol of the whole class of vain impostors in every branch of science. Knowing the nature and objects of that tremendous explosion, the materials for which he had assisted in preparing in France, he easily acquired a reputation for great wisdom and foresight by predicting the general course of events. Being perfectly acquainted with the seducing theory by which the revolution was to be recommended to the people of all countries, he was enabled to take a stand as one of the earliest converts to the doctrine of liberty and equality, and to exhibit himself as the most skilful apologist for the crimes and errors by which this doctrine was to be established. He stimulated the prejudices of the French Minister, Genet, against his colleagues in the American Cabinet, and after he had been

[a] "Ana." 4. Jeff. Wri. 494.

seduced into intemperate measures, this too sanguine instrument of his intriguing ambition was sacrificed without scruple. By a nice distinction between men and principles which Genet had made to justify his own opposition to Washington, Mr. Jefferson at once acquired a considerable portion of confidence with the grave and reflecting part of the community, without losing the support of the French Government; and though he acquired by this conduct the character of "an accommodating Trimmer," with the personal friends of the French Minister;[a] yet with the mass of the community Mr. Jefferson appeared with the double recommendation of being the ardent admirer of French principles, and the skilful opponent of an unpopular individual.

In his discussion with Mr. Hammond, the Envoy of Great Britain, Mr. Jefferson manifested the same duplicity of character. After discovering that Mr. Hammond had no powers to *conclude* a treaty of commerce, the want of this authority he treated as an evidence of unfriendly sentiments on the part of his nation; and as would seem probable with a view of increasing the supposed irritation, Mr. Jefferson proposed to Mr. Hammond an exchange of notes in which the mutual complaints of the two countries against each other should be specifically detailed. A more notable expedient for fomenting a quarrel could not have been devised, and the event justified the expectation which might have been formed. Mr. Jefferson negotiated a quarrel with great address with Mr. Hammond; and after having caused dissensions in the cabinet, having blown every spark of discontent into a flame, having embroiled his country in controversies with two powerful nations, and made himself the central point of every faction; he then (to adopt the memorable words of Fauchet) "prudently retired;" leaving the difficulties he had created, to be composed and adjusted by his successors."

The probability of a war with England was increased during the winter, not only by the violent hostility of the opposition, but by the conduct of that power itself; and it became evident that the defensive preparations recommended by the President were absolutely necessary. Measures for this purpose were accordingly introduced, and let it be remembered, by the so called British party. From the federalists originated the embargo, the navy, the additional troops, and the provincial army. In all these measures they were encountered by the majority of the opposition. The conduct of the anti-federalists was indeed extraordinary. While on one hand they opposed to the utmost, the establishment of a small naval force for the suppression of the Algerine cruisers, and recommend-

[a] Gov. Clinton, whose daughter Genet married.

ed in lieu thereof the purchase of peace with those pirates—on the other they passed every measure which could plunge the country into a war with the most powerful maritime nation in the world; and the principal weapons with which they proposed to coerce her, were commercial restrictions, non-intercourse and the sequestration of the debts due to her subjects. It is seldom that a course of conduct is without its motive, and the debts owed by the South, and particularly by Virginia, furnish a clue to many obscure points in our political history. To them more than to any other cause, was owing the steadfast opposition manifested to any settlement of the difficulties with Great Britain. Every subterfuge which legislation could devise had been resorted to, to avoid their payment, and as from these evasions much of the difficulty with that power was owing, so now an escape from them was sought in the continuance of the quarrel. Virginia, which governed the opposition, had no commerce. It was not upon her that the losses of a maritime war would fall, nor were the seamen who had been captured by the corsairs her citizens. A navy, or an embargo did not, therefore, further her interests, and although the seizures under the British provision laws, and the annoyances of British commercial regulations, afforded to her as to the federalists, a ground for indignation, she uttered no similar complaints against greater outrages on the part of France. It was not the crimes, but the criminal that she condemned. Never indeed did the character of the two parties contrast more strongly or more favorably to the federalists, than during this period. While their opponents thwarted every measure of defence against a catastrophe which they seemed determined to bring about, the friends of the administration were laboring to avert the war, and making preparations to meet it if unavoidable.

## FROM JEDEDIAH MORSE.

CHARLESTON, Dec. 16, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

Since I had the pleasure of seeing you in Philadelphia, that city has been the theatre of scenes of undescribable distress. I have been extremely solicitous for your and Mrs. Wolcott's safety, as well as for that of other friends, and I most sincerely rejoice with you in your preservation, and the restoration of health, happiness and business to the city. I hope the calamity will not prove so injurious as was once expected. Good Dr. Sproat is among the dead. Have the congregation supplied his place? The present is considered here as the most interesting period. The issue of General Wayne's expedition, of Genet's threatened prosecution of Messrs. Jay and King, of the President's request to have him recalled, of the combined attempts of Britain, Spain, Algiers, &c., to ruin our commerce, of the powerful and increasing operation against France; are events of great expectation. The body of the people repose great confidence in the wisdom of the President, of Congress, and of the heads of departments. The President's speech meets with much approbation. It is worthy of himself. We have some grumbletonians among us, who, when the French are victorious, speak loud and saucy, but when they meet with a check, sing small. They form a sort of political thermometer, by which we can pretty accurately determine what, in their opinion, is the state of French politics. The French cause has no enemies here—their conduct, many. There are some who undistinguishingly and undoubtedly approve both, and most bitterly denounce as aristocrats all who do not think as they do. This party, which is not numerous, nor as respectable as it is numerous, are about forming a democratic club, which, I think, they call the "Massachusetts Constitutional Society." I don't know their design, but suppose they consider themselves as the guardians of the rights of men, and overseers of of the President, Congress and you gentlemen, the heads of the principal departments of state, to see that you don't infringe on the constitution. They don't like nor see through your borrowing so much money in Holland. They are very suspicious about money matters.

A society held for the information and advice of foreigners who come to settle among us (of whom there have been many this last summer and fall) is about to be established. Some of our leading men met last evening for the purpose, and have appointed a committee to prepare a constitution. It will be a benevolent and useful society. I am now engaged with Mr. Webster, of New York, in the compilation of a Gazetteer of America. Dr. Williamson was publishing an account of the territory south of the Ohio when I was in Philadelphia, with a map; Carey was printing it. I wish to know whether it is published, to have a copy of it if it is, to forward to England, to a correspondent there, by a vessel going from Boston the beginning of January. Will you do me the favor to enquire of Carey whether it be published, and forward me one or two copies. I should like one to keep. I will see you compensated. If I mistake not, I am now doing what you gave me leave to do, or I don't know that I should have intruded on your valuable time, which is occupied in such important concerns. Pray, is Carey going on

with his Geography? I was told lately that he had given it up. Have you had an account of Kentucky in a series of letters. If you have, what is your opinion of the work? May it be relied on? By the way, I have not heard whether Mr. Hamilton has received the Geographies I sent him last summer. I hope they did not miscarry. We are all well. With best respects to Mrs. Wolcott, I believe that I am, in truth, Dr. Sir, your friend and servant,

J. MORSE.

## TO JEDEDIAH MORSE.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 30, 1793.

The most important question which promises to engage the attention of Congress is, whether they will enter into a system of commercial discrimination between the trade carried on to different foreign countries. Mr. Jefferson's report which you will see in the papers, contains the outline of what will be said on one side of the question. Many facts necessary to a judgment on this subject, will probably hereafter come before the public. This is a leading and important measure. If adopted, which, by the way, it will not be, it would lead this country into all the mazes of European politics. The favours granted to one power would disgust another, the consequences to our commerce could not be calculated, and would depend much on our comparative force and influence abroad. If this is a good project, it must be postponed until the affairs of Europe have acquired some settled policy. For the present, we must try to be just and impartial to all the world, at least until we receive such injuries as render it proper to declare war. Though a Connecticut man in religious opinions, I declare war against all half-way covenants in politics. It is a fortunate circumstance that this country possesses resources by which the Algerines can be easily managed. I take it for granted that something decisive will be done on this subject. The present state of things in Europe cannot continue long. Any result will contribute to our security. My hopes are stronger than my belief respecting a favourable issue.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., Jan. 2d, 1794.

I am to acknowledge your favour of the 9th December, which was seasonably received. Since the meeting of Congress, I have been unusually engaged—to repair the derangement which the public business suffered during the late sickness.

It is not easy to form any estimate of what the new members will think of the public business. We are to presume that many of them will endeavour to be candid and impartial. Others come impressed with violent and inveterate prejudices, and most of them must be uninformed of many interesting particulars. There is too much of a disposition to meddle with foreign affairs, and to love and hate nations without reason. The Algerine business has excited much resentment against the British. I fear it will not have precisely the effect which I

could wish; if the consequence had been to make us love our country the better, and to make all parties desirous of strengthening our resources; if it tended to convince us that foreign nations will disregard justice frequently, and generosity constantly, when in competition with their interests, we might derive advantage from the misfortune; but great will be the mischief if it shall induce a more intimate connection with foreign nations and dependence on them for support. The great effort appears to be to enter into a system of discrimination in our foreign commercial connections, favourable to France and unfavourable to England. The outlines of the plan appear in Mr. Jefferson's report. This is a leading measure, and if adopted, will engage us completely in the mazes of treaties and commercial politics, by which we must suffer while we remain the weaker power. May God grant that this country may never become a satellite of Europe, or have any special inducements to enter into other treaties than such as manifest expressions of amity to all, and leave us the entire power of consulting our own interests.

I send you certain documents on the questions with Genet, and will transmit the rest as soon as they are printed; they will explain the insolent conduct which has been pursued, and the difficult and dangerous situation of our affairs.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Litchfield, Jan. 13, 1794.

Sir,

Your favour of the 2d instant, with its enclosures, has been received. Till I had read this correspondence, I had not imagined that the French Minister had given the government trouble to the extent which I find he has done. The insolence and injustice with which we are treated by the warring nations, I think, ought to induce government, not only to provide for its internal defence, but seriously to begin to establish an efficient naval force—to effect which, the objects of taxation must be extended, and I imagine that a land tax will become necessary. The Americans are the objects of the envy and jealousy of the mercantile powers of Europe, on whose justice or moderation no reliance can be had. No benefit can be hoped for by partial commercial treaties, as respects our commercial security, but the contrary; and no treaty, I believe, ought to be adopted but upon the general principles of amity, and the most obvious and permanent reciprocity. If, in the event of things, other treaties shall become indispensably necessary, their duration ought to be limited; the shorter the better. I think that the English and Spaniards will endeavour to get possession of St. Domingo and Martinique, and hold them to indemnify themselves for the expenses of the war. If these are their views, it will account for some of their conduct, and should the event take place, it will be important and consequential relative to America. America must have a navy sufficient to make it respectable in the American seas; we can never be secure without it. European powers have too much commercial property on this side of the Atlantic not to respect a power which, in this way, can make a deep impression upon them. There are none of them to be trusted; but the Spaniards less so than either the English or French. * *

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 18, 1794.

The reason why I do not write oftener is, as you suppose, owing to the perpetual crowd of business during the session of Congress. The calls for information, as they are styled, keep the public officers in constant employment. If we found that our labors contributed to "inform," there would be a satisfaction in complying with the reiterated demands which are made; but when they appear intended to perplex, or excite suspicion, and thus lay the foundation for new inquiries, you will readily believe that compliance must be irksome. It will be a long time, I hope, before the friends of the government will relinquish the task of defence. Patience and perseverance, with a good cause, must finally prevail over the unrelenting persecution of the Virginia party.

The great project of the session appears to be an attempt to establish commercial discriminations, unfavourable to Britain and favourable to France. The Virginians, in general, hate the English because they owe them money; they love the French from consanguinity of character. Hence we must trade, not simply with a view to profit, but to display certain romantic affections and gratify resentments. The knowing ones have other reasons, and of a nature rather to be thought than spoken of. The people may be certain that all the cant about "aristocracy," "interested measures," and "tendency to monarchial plans," means something very different from what is pretended; they are now honestly served, and I hope they will continue to enjoy that good fortune. Genet is proved to have issued commissions in South Carolina for raising 5,000 men to operate against the Spaniards. The only excuse made, is, that no military acts were to be performed in the United States. The troops were to march out of our territory, and this, it is contended, would constitute an act of expatriation.

* * * *

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

HARTFORD, Feb, 10, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

* * * *

Politics are with you; and from what you write and what we read, they keep their old character of waywardness. If we let them have their way, they wont do quite so bad as we fear, and never so well as they might. For it is true that the wisest man can't do all the good he meditates, perhaps little more than disconcert rogues and sometimes lead Sans Culottes right, and rogues can seldom do all the mischief they intend, though more than half the time they will gull the Sans Culottes and have them on their side. We have an early account of the matter, in Satan's manœuvres in Paradise, which infidels may quarrel with as long as they please, the gray-headed politician will see too natural not to be true. Mr. Madison's propositions are insidious; the end designed by them will not be effected. I think we may predict, the agricultural interest will neither be

dragged or cajoled into a war. Cities are subject to sudden passions, and the dupes of design; but the body of our country is under the influence of cautious and reflecting men, interspersed in all quarters. However favorable a regard most express for the national cause of France, separate from the excesses of its rulers, no one avows an inclination for war.

Has not the government something to fear from its northern officers becoming jaded out, or will they stay in place to disoblige their enemies, as well as from patriotism? Who is to be Attorney-General? How are parties in Congress as to the treasury system, &c.?

I remain your affectionate friend,
CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## FROM ELIZUR GOODRICH.

New Haven, Feb. 25, 1794.

Dear Sir,

The bearer hereof, Mr. Eli Whitney, a young gentleman who has occasionally resided in my family for some years past, is on a journey to Philadelphia, to lodge a model and receive a patent for a machine, which he has invented for cleansing cotton from its seeds. The invention I conceive does much honour to its author, and promises profit to him and utility to his country, especially to the southern States. As I know you to be the friend of improvement, and imagining that should business permit you to view the model, you will be pleased with the invention, and the neatness and ingenuity wherewith it is reduced to practice, I have requested him to exhibit it to you, previous to lodging it with the Secretary of State. Mr. Whitney graduated at Yale College, Sept. 1792, sustained a very fair reputation in the academic studies, and is perhaps inferior to none in an acquaintance with the mechanic powers, and those branches of natural philosophy which are applicable to the commerce and manufactures of our country. To theory he happily unites talents to reduce it to practice; a circumstance which is rarely found in our young gentlemen of collegiate education. Surpassing the exactest workman of my acquaintance in wood, brass and iron, he is his own master workman in these respective branches, and resorts to himself to reduce his theories to experiment and practice. His designs are to obtain patents in England and other foreign parts, and for that purpose he hopes to avail himself of a rule, which Mr. Jefferson informed him was established in the office of the Secretary of State, viz.: that the models lodged in pursuance of the act of Congress, were not liable to public inspection. He will however cheerfully exhibit his model, and explain its principles to you, and such patrons of useful inventions as you may wish to introduce, as I have informed him that you feel too strongly interested in the inventions of this country, to suffer any thing to escape you, whereby a foreigner could rob the authors of their prospects of profits. I have the pleasure to inform you that I and mine are in health and happiness. Mrs. Goodrich joins me in suitable respects to Mrs. Wolcott, and I am with esteem and friendship, your humble servant,

ELIZUR GOODRICH.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., March 2d, 1794.

In the present situation of our public affairs, we have continual applications from Congress, in relation to facts for supporting or invalidating the arguments of conflicting parties. The trouble occasioned by this state of things is almost infinite, but it will be cheerfully bestowed, in case it tends in any degree to secure this country from participating in the most desolating war which ever disgraced the human species. I believe if the country continues firm and steady, we shall avoid actual war, though the mercantile interest must suffer great loss. If however the spirit which governs too many in our great towns and some popular leaders, becomes prevalent, the honour and liberty of our country will be sacrificed. The dreadful examples in France have now secured even the worst governments in Europe from innovations at this time, and though the French cannot, and will not be conquered by their enemies ; yet every thing respectable in society will be destroyed by the pressure of the most implacable and sanguinary despotism that was ever erected. This state of things renders the British and other governments less careful to treat us with justice, and the more willing that we should disgrace our principles by falling into disorders. They well know that our external force is nothing, and that external injuries will produce internal factions which we cannot manage.

There is too much reason to fear that a considerable force has moved from Kentucky against New Orleans. Such an event would greatly perplex the government. It is certain that Genet sent his commissions, and that a large body of men have been engaged. A cruel return to the United States for the expense which has been incurred on their account. There is but one way for us to avoid troubles of the most serious nature, and that is, to determine that we will not go to war. If commerce cannot be pursued, we must discontinue it, but this will not be necessary if we are prudent.

A committee of fifteen members are investigating the state of the treasury department. Some of the members are enemies to the Secretary, but he is an honest and able man, and as every thing in relation to his official conduct is capable of a solid defence, no injury can be inflicted. It will occasion us some hard work, but this we are used to, and do not mind.

## TO FREDERICK WOLCOTT.

PHILA., March 3d, 1794.

* * * *

You gentlemen of the country instead of thinking that you know less, ought to be sensible that you know more of every thing useful and desirable to be known, than those who live in cities, which are for the most part the seats of vanity, ignorance and vice. Of this be certain, that when the country becomes possessed of the same spirit and character which is prominent in most of our great towns,

the happiness and liberty of our country will be terminated. This is not spleen of mine, for I have met with nothing special to excite disgust. Ask Mr. Tracy or Mr. Swift when they return, and they will tell you as I do. The people of Connecticut at this time enjoy the best state of society, and are the most happy community under heaven. They have the reputation of being in this situation; they have therefore the strongest motives for maintaining their present character. Be assured that their representation in Congress is considered as the most respectable in the United States, having no scape goat, and no character destitute of respectable talents. The only effect which this information is intended to produce, is contentment with what passes in this imperfect state. By knowing what is the best we are to expect, we naturally become satisfied. It is not natural but artificial evil, which is the chief cause of our anxiety.

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

Hartford, March 10th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

We are become quite solicitous about the measures of government, for now our legislators have grown from the pigmy size of continental politicians into the enormous stature of lords of a world, we daily feel ourselves increasing in our bulk, and now begin to extend our thoughts far and near, and throw about systems as we were wont to do foot balls. As yet it rests only in speculations; we don't act, not even in resolves democratic, or boast panegyrical or condemnatory. It is doubtful whether we shall attain to that perfection of grace, seeing our cities are so small in extent and numbers, and so many of them. One of them did, it is true, lately become a little intoxicated; but on sleeping, has, I understand, regained a more sober state, and it is hoped will in future be circumspect.

The sympathy or connection between nations is greater than heretofore. I had imagined, and it seems almost impossible to keep ourselves from being ingulphed in the follies and excesses of Europe—one part of it cajoling us, and the other irritating our spirits by the most impolitic and mad acts. After all I think the sober reason of our country will have so much self government, as not to risque its tranquillity or happiness, till the extremest necessity requires it. I presume the party who espouse measures to the contrary, are inconsiderable in comparison to the whole. A distinction is to be made between an attachment to the cause of the French, and a serious determination to embroil ourselves. When a party have a measure to carry, they cover it over a while and gild it with some specious appearance, and make such a clamor, it seems as if the world were at their heels. Men of reflection give them their humour, but when they come to act, it is with an invincible force. Minorities frequently plume themselves on being most in numbers, and to their shame, find only a few left who have gone too far to retreat. A question so interesting as the peace of America, must be ultimately decided by the voice of the people; and yet they heartily deprecate a war. Should Congress commit the peace of this country, it would not be long before they would hear the expressions of a very general resentment and be obliged to change their measures.

It is natural to expect the Sans Culottish spirit should in a degree infect people and contaminate public measures, and a nice and delicate regard is necessary on the part of government to check or restrain its excesses. There are moments when government does well not to go retrograde, or even to hold itself in existence; and the question then does not seem to be, how much good can be done, but how much evil can be prevented.

I have no doubt unwearied endeavours are used through the Union to embitter the public mind and sow jealousies of the government, and with partial success; some such are found here, but as yet I don't observe any discontent to be regarded. Our sober good folks regret the want of union in Congress, and think it strange they divide so uniformly on almost all questions; they say, General Washington will at last set them right; they yet look up to him more than they do to the Almighty, for they think he is nearer to them, and have no doubt of his ability and will to do them good.

If we mean to succeed as a Republic, and we have had too much good from one to give up the idea, I believe we must devise some better way than now in practice, as to our relations to foreign nations and negociations. A set of diplomatiques scattered over a republic, is a kind of Beelzebub with his family in the midst of republicans; they operate directly on the public mind, and that is the will of our government; but if we must have a corps of such creatures of our own abroad, and of theirs here, we ought as soon as possible to learn our people, they are an enemy in disguise of friends, who are come to corrupt with their gold, terrify by threats, cajole, and above all, work through our public presses their own schemes.

If it be necessary we ought to be told, it is considered an evil among the works of God; and though no man among us may touch the person, because he has attributes of majesty and nations in every nerve, yet we ought to know, that mischiefs like Hydras are constantly springing out, and that it is our duty to destroy them instantly on sight. One more Genet in this country will make us sick of diplomatiques. If we want to do any business abroad, give some good fellow a letter of attorney and let him do it. This borders on the democratic, and is most likely only the ravings of an uncourtly wretch. Every body says, we ought to have as little to do with Europe, except in the single article of commerce, as possible. Yet we want treaties, ambassadors, navies, etc., and all because we would not be connected with them. An old Quaker would not do so; he would keep the peace by minding his own business, and letting other folks alone, and if he was struck on one cheek he would turn the other, and though he would not exhibit much true spirit he would live in peace, and not die in debt. * *

Yours, CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Litchfield, March 17, 1794.

Sir,

Your letter of the 2d instant, enclosing one to your brother, has been received. Although it is very agreeable to receive letters from you, yet in the present oppression of your business, I do not expect you will find time to write often. The

same men who are pursuing other measures, destructive of the interest and honor of their country, have for a long time been persecuting the Secretary of the Treasury, hoping that they may either find some error in his conduct, or be able to give the alarm of suspicion or harass him so far as to induce him to resign his office ; but I trust they will be disappointed in their nefarious designs.

* * I find that I have been entirely disappointed as to what would be the decided prevalent conduct of the present Congress. There are not only some very artful, designing and ambitious men amongst them, and some such are always to be found in every popular assembly, but there certainly must be a most undue proportion of members destitute of ordinary understanding ; otherwise the honor of these States would not be prostituted in the manner in which it is. Do not these men know, that by their ridiculous altercations and divisions about matters in which America has no interest, and by enlisting themselves under the banner of foreign ministers they only render their country the proper object of insult! Is it possible for any nation, the most unenlightened, to have the least respect for such a government? If these people are determined to go to war, it ought to be against those who have insulted them the most and are the least able to annoy them, and these certainly are the French, who have more grossly violated the laws of nations than any other, (and that under the accumulated guilt of breaking a solemn compact) and by a most insidious attempt have been practising to draw us into a war, contrary to their public professions—and the same conduct, under some other specious appearance, will continue to be practised by them. Genet is too abhorred a villain to have his name mentioned by any man of the least honor or virtue. I trust that the French will not get possession of New Orleans. There is no nation in the universe whose neighborhood we ought equally to detest. I am clear in this opinion, that in the present delirium of the European nations, which, I believe, cannot last long, and in the present state of America, she ought not to go to war upon any event, unless insulted in her harbors or upon her coast, and we ought to be in some condition to guard against such an abuse. The nations who have warred upon France must perceive that all attempts to reduce them will be unavailing. It is not best that they should succeed, and they cannot gratify their resentment so effectually as by letting the French alone, and in their anarchy to suffer the savage, murderous disposition of that people to recoil upon themselves.

Individual characters in the present Congress are justly esteemed by us, among which number, I am happy to know that the gentlemen from this state are ranked, but the collective character was never so low as at present ; and I believe there are few men with us of information, but place confidence in the wisdom and stability of the Executive, and wish not to see the least cession of his constitutional powers, which it has been attempted to induce, and that he exercise in the most plenary manner every power which he is vested with, and not suffer any act of Congress to pass but what obtains, from clear conviction, his most entire approbation. In the exercise of such authority, I am well persuaded, he will be supported by the people of America. And no other influence ought ever to be adduced from the opinions of the mobs of our capitals, but that they are, and for ever will be, repugnant to the sober and prevalent sense of the people of these States. OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, April 14th, 1794.

* * * *

This last winter has been to me the most anxious of my life ; the perplexity of business has increased artificially by the enquiry into the state of the department, and the critical state of our public affairs has rendered the time unpleasant. I presume that the enquiry is nearly over, and that the result will be satisfactory. I am certain it will be so, if truth and candour have any influence on the decision. The committee, or at least a majority of them, would on party principles be disposed to censure the Treasury ; but I believe that but few will be disposed to disregard truth and evidence in their report. If the people of the United States knew how perversely their business was managed by a faction, how zealously some were endeavouring to engage us in war, how every measure tending to place the country in a state of defence, or to promote a friendly explanation with those who injure us, was embarrassed and prevented ; I am certain that their resentments could not be repressed. It is not to be denied, that since Great Britain has been at war with France a foreign influence has been visible. The motives are too many and probably too disgraceful to be detailed ; the abolition of certain debts, the ruin of the public credit, and a degradation of the government may however be mentioned, as they are understood to be avowed objects with many. To accomplish these purposes, a conduct has prevailed in our great towns generally, and in some of the southern states, which could not fail to excite the suspicions and resentment of Great Britain and Spain ; these causes, with an unfortunate deviation from neutrality in one instance, and the great extent to which a contraband or masked trade has been carried on from some parts into this quarter, have tended to give colour to intrigue which those powers were otherwise disposed to commit. It may be added, that the British Minister[a] is a weak, vain and imprudent character, very much in the company and under the influence of sour and prejudiced tories, who wish to see the country disgraced. The consequence of which is, that we suffer real injuries which we no otherwise resent than by puerile declamations, and by propositions which can have no other effect than to disunite and to disgrace the country. This state of things is precisely what a party wish should continue ; they therefore oppose all measures which would produce an an explanation, and at the same time obstruct all arrangements for either offensive or defensive operations. The state of irritation which is thus kept up, the loss of property and consequent risk of the public credit which is produced, subserves this grand design of an intimate coalition with France, founded on the weakness and degradation of this country. It is a more humiliating consideration to perceive how devoted many are to the banners of a foreign leader, and painful to reflect on the dreadful consequences which may ensue from a war undertaken with such views and designs. For my part, I do not hesitate to declare that I had rather know that the United States were to be erased from exist-

[a] Mr. Hammond.

ence than infected with the French principles, or under the influence of any foreign nation whatever. A bold and very honorable course of conduct has been adopted by most of the members from New England; and, in the opinion of all reflecting men here, if the country is so fortunate as to avoid war, it must be by their exertions in restraining the violence of faction. Instead of sequestering debts, inhibiting the importation of British manufactures, partial commercial arrangements and weak indulgences to France; the real friends to this country are endeavouring to secure the harbours, to increase the public force and revenues, and to call for a full explanation of the designs of Great Britain towards us. Some of these measures have obtained fully, others partially, but all have been violently opposed. Nothing very wrong has yet been done, though much has been attempted; on the whole, the session has reflected no honor upon the government or the country. Weakness, passion and suspicion have been leading characteristics in the public proceedings; the only salutary reflection which it can have produced is, that the tone of the government must be braced, not weakened, if the people do not mean to be cheated out of their liberties by an inoperative administration. I am happy to believe that this true impression has been received by the northern gentlemen, who are indeed the only men in Congress (with some few exceptions) competent to judge of the subject.

Lest you suppose that I have too severely criminated the opposition and war party in Congress, I send you a paper containing the late votes of the Democratic Society in Philadelphia; all the charges which I have imputed are to be found in this paper. It is here well known that these popular societies speak the sentiments of certain demagogues, and that the clubs consist of hot-headed, ignorant or wicked men, devoted entirely to the views of France.

I think I may assure you that the embarrassments of this country have, in a great measure, been the fruit of designing politicians that war may be yet avoided, by negotiation, but that every exertion will be made to lead this country into measures of which war is to be the consequence.

## OLIVER ELLSWORTH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, Ap. 5, 1794.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your letter, received some time since, and for your opinion of Mr. Madison's propositions. Probably you do not mistake in supposing them to be insidious and incapable of producing any other effect than mischief. They have not, however yet passed, and I trust will not.

The debts of the South, which were doubtless among the causes of the late revolution, have ever since operated to obstruct its benefits, by opposing compulsive energy of government, generating mist and irritation between this country and Great Britain, and, of course, giving a baleful ascendancy to French influence. Under these auspices, an extensive combination of the wicked and the weak has been arranged for some time past, and will probably continue its efforts to disturb the peace of this country so long as the European contest continues in its present state of dubiety. Some precipitate measures are now contemplating in

Congress, but I hope in a few days we shall see the business turned into a channel of negotiation, and a respectable special envoy sent to London, on the subject of commercial spoliations. A negociation of this kind, with proper interior arrangements to give it weight, would, I presume, save us from war.

I do most sincerely sympathize with you in the afflicting state of your family, and am, dear sir, with every sentiment of esteem, your ob't humble serv't,

OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

## OLIVER ELLSWORTH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, April 16, 1794.

Dear Sir,

In a late letter I suggested to you the idea of turning our grievances into a channel of negociation. I now venture to assure you that Mr. Jay will be sent as special envoy to the Court of London, with such powers and instructions as probably will produce the desired effect. His nomination will come forward this day or to-morrow. He is now here, and has this moment informed me of his determination to accept the appointment if it shall be made. This, sir, will be a mortifying movement to those who have endeavoured by every possible means to prevent a reconciliation between this country and Great Britain. The British instructions of the eighth January which I sent you, begin to operate favourably in the West Indies. The embargo I trust, will not be continued beyond the thirty days for which it was laid. It ought not to have been laid at all. * * With much respect and esteem, I am, dear sir, your obedient humble servant,

OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

## TO NOAH WEBSTER.

PHILADELPHIA, May 3d, 1794.

I acknowledge your favour of the 20th of April with the enclosed pamphlet, which I have perused with much satisfaction. It is precisely the thing which I have long wished to be published, and will eminently serve to fix the public opinion on national principles, and to tranquillize those passions which have threatened the peace of this country. Whether the governments of Europe have arrived at that maturity in wickedness, which renders it necessary on physical and moral principles that the people should revert to barbarism, I pretend not to determine. That all governments of the degree of vigor of those of Europe, which have cultivated the arts, sciences and commerce, terminate in this way, is certain from universal experience and the known principles of human nature. I do not therefore expect a speedy return of tranquillity. I am certain that the modern French principles are inconsistent with the present state of society in Europe. If the French succeed in their resistance, they will do more, and overturn every government, except perhaps those in the north of Europe. The destruction will moreover be signal and complete, and will equally involve the refinements which have contributed to improve and adorn, or degrade and debase

human nature. The reason is obvious; the mild philosophic and the insolent oppressor, will from habit and interest oppose radical changes, and will therefore be indiscriminatingly proscribed as the enemies of reformation. If the French are subdued, Europe will be crushed under the despotism of tyrants. The people must either expect the tranquillity which prevails where liberty is extinct, and all the energies of the human mind are subdued, or the crimes and desolation which mark the exit and formation of empires. There is no alternative; Europe must be what Asia now is, or must witness a repetition of those horrors which subverted the Roman empire.

During this interesting period, the duty of an American citizen is obvious; we ought carefully to guard against any deterioration of our principles, to reject all novelties and innovations, to respect ourselves, to offend none, to be prepared for defence against invasions and intrigues, and above all, to come to an absolute determination, that we will on no account become a party in the war. From the moment that we engage in war, I consider every thing as unsafe; we cannot in that case proceed regularly, without changing the whole machinery of our government. If the war is conducted on desultory predatory principles, the United States will become the resort of profligate ruffians from every country, who will corrupt us, and render it impossible to maintain our present government. With these principles you will believe that I read the book you sent me with pleasure, and with a sincere wish that it may produce the good effects for which it is calculated.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

May 3d, 1794.

I received your letter announcing the intelligence of my mother's death. Though this event has been for some time expected, yet it was not the less agonizing to me, who have been deprived of a parent who possessed and well deserved my most perfect affection, gratitude and respect. It is however on such melancholy occasions that the dignity of virtue and the consolations of religion, appear most conspicuous; and happy it is for us that in the life and death of our mother they have been fully illustrated. To live with honour and respect, to die lamented, and confidently to expect a happy futurity, is to attain every good allowed to humanity. In all these particulars our departed parent was eminently distinguished.

Congress have completed but little of the important business before them. I wish I could bring my mind to believe, that no danger attended this country. The passions of many are so violent, and such the real diversity of views and interests, that the prospect of tranquillity and permanency in our public policy has much diminished. The fortunes of America and the destiny of republicanism, depend on the stability of the northern States. We must have a government, and this is the last that can be settled in the United States, by the general consent of the present members. There is much to be apprehended from the great numbers of violent men who emigrate to this country from every part of

Europe. Our people here and at the southward, are much cheated by their false professions and their intrigues, and there is real danger of some violent explosion.

I expect that the session will continue nearly through the present month. Several interesting questions are depending, which will require the exertions of all the sober characters belonging to Congress.

Some of the events of this winter will now require a short review. During the last autumn it had been ascertained that a plan was on foot for organizing an expedition in Kentucky against New Orleans, and that several French agents commissioned by Mr. Genet, had actually commenced operations. Measures were immediately taken to prevent their further progress. In the winter another project was discovered of attacking the Floridas by a force from Georgia, which was defeated by the vigilance of the Legislature of South Carolina. The detection of these schemes rendered necessary the adoption of decisive measures towards their author, and he was only saved from actual dismission by the news of his recall.

The withholding of the navigation of the Mississippi was a serious injury to the settlers of the country west of the Alleghanies, and had been the subject of continued dissatisfaction among them. Notwithstanding that the government had urgently pressed this matter in its negociations with Spain, their discontent was extended to the administration, and was evidently fostered by the same hands that had nursed sedition in Pennsylvania, and for the same purposes. The occasion was seized by the French as a fitting one for forwarding their own views; the excitement was dexterously fanned into a flame, and the possession of the river was connected with visions of conquest, and even of a separate national existence. An angry remonstrance sent to the President and to Congress at this session, by some citizens of Kentucky, concluded a demand of their rights by obscure hints of a dismemberment, in case they were not obtained. The governor of that state himself, declined on most extraordinary

grounds, the exercise of his authority in preventing the meditated attack. This spirit was maintained for some time in the western country, and reference will be hereafter made to other occasions on which it showed itself.

M. Joseph Fauchet, as the ostensible Minister, with M. M. La Forest and Pétry, under the respective titles of Consul-General and Consul for Pennsylvania, as his associates, was sent to succeed M. Genet, and reached this country in February. The latter, for good reasons of his own, remained in this country; his failure might, under Robespierre, have cost him his head; the instructions under which he had acted, which he published as a justification of his proceedings, in disclosing the designs of his own government, reflected little credit on the party by whose aid he so nearly succeeded in carrying them into effect.

Early in April, while the preparations for the expected war were in progress, and before the decision on the various commercial propositions, news arrived of the revocation, by the British government, of the instructions of the 6th November, and of some conciliatory explanations from Lord Grenville. The opportunity offered for the amicable adjustment of the existing difficulties with that nation, was at once improved by the President, and on the 16th April, Chief Justice Jay was nominated Envoy Extraordinary to the British Court.

As the proclamation of neutrality, and, indeed, every measure, not only for the preservation of peace, but of the dignity and sovereignty of the nation, every assertion of its rights against the demands of France, in fine, every act of whatsoever nature or kind originating from the President or the federal party, had become the subject of opposition, of gross personal abuse and falsehood from the Jacobin press, it cannot be expected that this nomination should have escaped the same fate. In fact, hardly a measure of Washington's whole administration incurred

more censure, it may be said, more vilification. In Congress, the greatest efforts were made by the opposition to defeat the objects of the mission by the adoption of hostile measures.

About the same time, Mr. Morris was, at the request of the government, recalled from France and, with some hesitation, Mr. Monroe appointed in his place. This nomination was confirmed on the 28th of May. It was imagined that his known principles on the subject of the French revolution, would obtain for him a greater degree of confidence from the government and the better ensure the success of his mission. The result, however, showed the error of such a reliance. The objects of a mission to France were now become of vital importance. Her surreptitious attempts to draw this country into the war, had been but a part of the injuries committed by her. The long-continued and distressing embargo on the vessels in the port of Bordeaux, illegal captures by French ships of war and privateers, the seizure and forced sales of cargoes and their appropriation to public use without payment, the non-performance of contracts made by the agents of the government for supplies, the oppressions exercised by their courts of admiralty, the taking all foreign trade from individuals into the hands of government, successive orders and decrees contrary to treaty stipulations, were fast making up a catalogue of wrongs against our self-styled ally, that far over-shadowed those which had so justly excited public indignation against Great Britain. Unless these could be redressed—war, submission to the will of France, or national disgrace and private ruin must follow.

Mr. John Quincy Adams was, in the month of May, commissioned Minister Resident at the Hague.

The adjournment took place on the ninth of June. The majority obtained by the anti-federalists in the House of Representatives had at last enabled them to effect the

desired object of preventing references to Mr. Hamilton on the measures pertaining to his department. Fresh enquiries had been instituted into his conduct and a committee of fifteen, of which a majority were members of the opposition, appointed to investigate it. Their report was made on the 22d of May. "The result," says Marshall, "was the more honourable to the Secretary because it was conducted by those who were not his friends."

Notwithstanding their minority, the federalists were generally successful in preserving the principles of their own policy as regarded both the affairs of state and of finance. Acts were passed providing for the fortification of the principal forts; for raising a corps of artillerists and engineers; directing a detachment from the militia and for obtaining a supply of arms; and authorizing the President to lay an embargo.[a] While these defensive measures were thus adopted in case of a necessity of war, those introduced by the opposite party tending to produce it, were, including the discriminating duties of Mr. Madison, defeated. Circumstances during this session aided the federalists in obtaining these successes, but the ability of the leaders contributed not a little to the end.

There was one act resisted to the last by the anti-federalists, and finally carried by a bare majority in the House, and in the Senate by the casting vote of the Vice President, of which the justice and propriety were so obvious, that a faction bent on war at all events, and for any cause, could alone have opposed it. It was the bill "in addition to the act for punishing certain crimes against the United States." This bill prohibited the exercise within the territories of the United States, of those acts of sovereignty which M. Genet had arrogated. It rendered penal the taking arms against neutral powers, levying war against their territories, fitting out vessels for the purpose

[a] The embargo was laid March 26th, and continued to May 25th, 1794.

of privateering on their commerce, or selling their prizes in our ports.

For the purpose of meeting the expenses arising from the present situation of affairs, additional funds were requisite. A loan of one million was authorized for the exigencies of public service, another of the same sum for purchasing a treaty with the Algerines and ransoming the captives in their possession. This course was advocated by the anti-federalists in preference to a navy, as less expensive and in accordance with the usages of much more powerful nations. The few frigates which were provisionally permitted to be built were to be discontinued on the conclusion of peace. As additional revenue was absolutely nesessary, the committee of ways and means were directed to report the sources from which it could be obtained. The debates on the report manifested a wide difference of opinion between the two parties upon this point. The anti-federalists proposed raising the whole sum required by additional imports on imported goods, and by a direct tax on real estate. The motive for urging this latter tax was unquestionably that, as the most unpopular, it would result in the speedy breaking down of their rivals, and when in after years it became necessary in view of apprehended war to impose such a tax, it was used as a means to this end, and Mr. Jefferson's administration rested much of their claim to popularity upon its abolition. It was now however advocated by his adherents.

The federalists on the contrary proposed an extension of the objects of internal taxation, and succeeded so far as to procure its imposition upon carriages for the conveyance of persons, on licenses for retailing wines and liquors, on sugar refined, and snuff manufactured within the United States, and on sales of property at auction. Some additional duties were likewise laid on imports.

During the session the Commissioners appointed in 1790, to examine and adjust the accounts of the several

states with the United States, made their final report. Balances were found due to Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New Jersey, South Carolina and Georgia. The others were debtor states. For these amounts stocks were issued of the kind and in the proportions contemplated by the act of 1790, and provision was now made for the payment of the interest thereon.

The legislature of Connecticut at their May session commissioned Wolcott and Mr. Ellsworth, or either of them, to loan to the United States the balance thus found due. They had some years previously acted as commissioners on the part of the state in the settlement of these accounts.

# CHAPTER VI.

## SUMMER AND FALL OF 1794.

### FROM COL. JOHN TRUMBULL.

FALMOUTH, June 8th, 1794.

Dear Sir,

I have the pleasure to acquaint you that Mr. Jay landed this afternoon in tolerable health, though much fatigued with the passage. The British April packet arrived only yesterday with the account of his appointment. He will proceed to London immediately. This is not, perhaps, a place for correct intelligence, but I am told by some respectable people that the disposition here is favourable to his object. It is also said that Portugal has renewed the war with the Algerines. An attempt has also begun in Poland at an emancipation from the division of last year, and is so far successful. The French conduct the war in Flanders this spring as they did on the Rhine last year. No week, and few days pass without a battle. The loss of men is great on both sides, but neither has as yet gained any decisive advantage. I am truly your friend and servant.

JNO. TRUMBULL.

LONDON, June 23d, 1794.

Dear Sir,

I wrote you a few lines from Falmouth by the packet of the 9th, to say that Mr. Jay was arrived and well. He has now been in town a week, and so far as can be judged from the conversation of merchants concerned in the American affairs, there is reason to hope a favourable issue to his mission; but how it may end we must not be too sanguine. Your friend Barlow was by the last accounts at Hamburgh; what doing I know not. He had found it necessary to quit France. It will by no means answer for him to come to this country, and unless his opinions and principles change, I hope he will not find his way to America. If he should, exert yourself to convert him from the error of his ways. The war goes on with unabated violence. The papers will tell you of the terrible naval battle, than which, few more obstinate or bloody are recorded in British History. Both fleets are expected to be at sea soon, and will probably meet again—the British to complete, the French to retrieve the glory of the day. The French have decidedly the advantage on the frontiers of Spain and Italy. They lose ground on the Rhine; and in Flanders, after many obstinate conflicts, neither

party has gained much. Ypres is now besieged by the French and several unsuccessful attempts have been made by Count Clairfait for its relief. It can hold out but few days, and if it fall, all the coast of Flanders is laid open; for it was a measure of the Emperor Joseph to dismantle most of the fortified towns of this quarter, and Ypres is now the only one of any strength. Serious apprehensions are entertained for Ostend, and Lord Moira's troops, which have been lying at the Isle of Wight, are said to be ordered thither to reinforce the garrison. They sailed yesterday. My only hope is that all parties will see the inutility of the war by which none appears to gain, and of the which the great consequence is the immense waste of human blood, happiness and treasure. The government of France has had another change of hands, and Danton, who was once omnipotent, has in his turn come to the guillotine. How long Robespierre will maintain his present dictatorial power is very uncertain. A scarcity, but not a want of bread has been experienced in some parts of France. Serious inconvenience has no where been felt from this source, and now that the potatoes (which are cultivated even in the once royal gardens of Paris) are well grown, the harvest beginning in the south, and the fleet from the Chesapeake arrived, it appears to me that all hopes and fears on this point must be put asleep. How little is the prospect of conquest by the allies, is allowed by most men; how little the prospect of good and truly free government in France must be obvious to all. May we preserve the blessings of good government and peace which we possess.

Yours truly,

J. TRUMBULL.

The summer of 1794 was signalized by the insurrection in the western counties of Pennsylvania; an event which had its origin, indeed, in the dissatisfaction at the law of 1791, imposing a duty on spirits distilled within the United States, but which assumed its formidable aspect chiefly from other causes. The influences which produced this result, were of a nature sufficiently characteristic of the state of party spirit to justify particular notice.

An excise, however necessary, is easily rendered unpopular, and the present one was in Pennsylvania perhaps the more so, from the former existence of a similar tax under the state government. In the western district, moreover, where an immense amount of whiskey was distilled, the population, scattered thinly over a frontier country, was composed in great part of foreigners, many of whom were of a wild and lawless character, and little

disposed to submit to even the taxation necessary for the public support. Popular opposition to the tax commenced there almost simultaneously with the passage of the law imposing it, and was at first manifested by attempts to discourage the accepting of offices thereby created. As measures to carry the latter into operation progressed, stronger means were adopted to counteract them; meetings were held in different places, and the tenor of the speeches and resolutions were calculated to excite public odium against the officers, and to foster a spirit of sedition; associations were formed, county committees regularly organized, and handbills of a most inflammatory character were everywhere circulated. The consequences of these proceedings followed, in successive and barbarous outrages upon the revenue officers—whipping, tarring and branding. Congress, desirous of avoiding all just objections, during the session of 1791–1792 revised the law, moderating the duties and doing away with its more obnoxious features. The general opposition in consequence subsided in great measure, and it is probable that the same result would gradually have been attained in the western counties, had not the local discontent been, here in particular, fostered by party-spirit. Exertions had been made by the enemies of the government to turn the excitement to political advantage, and by coupling censures of other measures with declamation against the excise law, the disaffection was rendered more general and at the same time the spirit of violence was increased. Renewed outrages followed; the malcontents proceeded to intimidate the well-disposed among the inhabitants; the distillers were prevented from entering their stills, and destruction was threatened to the property of those who permitted offices of inspection to be opened on their premises. The office in one county was actually suppressed. The evidences of a systematic plan of opposition became daily more evident, and men were found connected with

the movement, the influence of whose example was calculated to produce in such a state of affairs the most dangerous result.

The meeting held at Pittsburgh on the 22d of August, 1792, "of sundry inhabitants of the western counties of Pennsylvania," was an example. The Chairman of that meeting was Col. John Canon, a man of conspicuous standing in the district; the Secretary was Mr. Gallatin, a prominent member of the State Legislature; Mr. Smilie, another member, Mr. Edward Cook, an Associate Judge, Col. James Marshal, the Rev. David Phillips, David Bradford, Esq., and other persons of note or influence were present. The excise law being taken under consideration, and as appears by the minutes "fully debated," was referred to a committee consisting of Messrs. Bradford, Marshal, Gallatin, Lisle, and Phillips, to prepare "a draught of resolutions expressing the sense of the meeting on the subject of said law." The report was made the next day, and "being twice read and debated by paragraphs, was unanimously adopted." The following was the preamble:

"Strongly impressed with a sense of the fatal consequences that must attend an excise; convinced that a tax upon liquors which are the common drink of a nation operates in proportion to the number and not to the wealth of a people, and of course is unjust in itself and oppressive upon the poor; taught by the experience of other countries that internal taxes upon consumption, from their very nature never can effectually be carried into operation without vesting the officers appointed to collect them with powers most dangerous to the civil rights of freemen, and must, in the end, destroy the liberties of every country in which they are introduced; feeling that the late excise law of Congress, from the present circumstances of our agriculture, our want of markets, and the scarcity of a circulating medium, will bring immediate distress and

ruin on the western country; we think it our duty to persist in our remonstrances to Congress, and IN EVERY OTHER LEGAL MEASURE THAT MAY OBSTRUCT THE OPERATION OF THE LAW, until we are able to procure its total repeal."

This idea of obstructing the operation of a law by legal measures was original with the committee; but their opinions of the way in which it would be obstructed, were probably derived from experience, and were pointed out with some distinctness in the resolutions which followed.

A committee of five was appointed to draw up a remonstrance to Congress, stating the objections to the law and praying its repeal, and "in order that their measures might be carried on with regularity and concert," twenty-one persons were appointed committees of correspondence for the counties of Washington, Fayette and Alleghany, whose duty it should be "to correspond together, and with such committee as shall be appointed for the same purpose in the county of Westmoreland, or with any committees of a similar nature that shall be appointed in other parts of the United States; and also, if found necessary, to call together either general meetings of the people in their respective counties or conferences of the several committees." They concluded:

"And whereas some men may be found among us, so far lost to every sense of virtue and feeling for the distresses of this country as to accept offices for the collection of the duty:

"Resolved, therefore, that in future we will consider such persons as unworthy of our friendship; have no intercourse or dealings with them; withdraw from them every assistance, and withhold all the comforts of life which depend upon those duties which as men and fellow-citizens we owe to each other, and upon all occasions treat them with that contempt they deserve; and that it

be, and it is hereby most earnestly recommended to the people at large, to follow the same line of conduct towards them."

These resolutions were by order published in the Pittsburgh Gazette. The extent and direction given to the spirit of disaffection, may be judged from the following extract:

GEORGE CLYMER TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

OCTOBER 10, 1792.

* * * *

The survey includes in it five counties—Washington, Fayette, Westmoreland, Alleghany and Bedford. The temper and disposition of the first four of these counties with respect to the excise, may be understood generally from what I have already written; but there are shades of difference between them to be remarked, proceeding from the character and views of individuals who have obtained influence among the people.

Washington—This county is the most repugnant to the law, and furnishes the most examples of violence. Bradford, a lawyer who prosecutes in the state courts under the Attorney General, and Marshall, once county lieutenant, now register, are the great leaders. The justices of the peace and clergy also, are among the most outrageous.

Fayette—Scarce more moderate than the former, tho' occasion has not ministered to as many acts of violence. Smilie and Gallatin, both members of the Assembly, are the professed leaders.

Westmoreland—Engaged in the general opposition; though the father of all the disturbances of the western country, has, to save his own character, given it in this county a particular direction. He has, accordingly, kept his people of Westmoreland out of combinations and committees, thinking it more advisable to hand a petition round the county, to be signed individually. An officer, however, has no better treatment here than in the other counties.

Alleghany—Has taken no decided part. It has proceeded to no violence, yet is afraid to run counter to the general spirit. I do not know any professed leader of opposition, nor yet any one of sufficient courage to advocate the law. Consequently, though an officer should have nothing to fear from combination, yet he would not be protected from individual insult.

It may seem strange, that among so numerous a people as inhabit these counties, none are to be found willing to support the government of the United States. In truth, the whole mass under Findley and Smilie, being once thoroughly corrupted and disaffected to it, would now at best, the excise out of the question, be but perfectly indifferent to it. Individuals there are, undoubtedly, who think rightly; but all their men of distinction are either sordid shopkeepers, crafty

lawyers, or candidates for office, not inclined to make personal sacrifices to truth or honor. There is, besides, no small reason to suspect an infusion of state jealousy. It may be said, too, in general, that the duties of citizenship are but poorly understood or regarded, where the moral sense is so generally depraved as it is in this country, by the intemperate use of the favorite drink. He must be inattentive, indeed, who does not make this observation. * *

A proclamation against unlawful combinations was issued by the President in September, 1792, and legal measures adopted against the delinquents and the rioters. The first was disregarded; the distance of the federal courts from the refractory counties prevented any successful enforcement of the law by civil process, and the extent of the combination secured impunity to violence. Further legislative measures were introduced at the succeeding sessions of Congress to suit the exigencies of the occasion, but in the meantime the law continued to be disobeyed—the few distillers who complied with it were plundered, and their property burnt or destroyed. The house of the collector of Fayette and Westmoreland was, in November, 1793, entered at night by an armed party, headed, it was believed, by the son of Mr. Smilie, and the officer forced, at the peril of his life, to give up his commission and books.

Such had been the situation of the western survey when Genet arrived in America, and to this part of the country were the machinations of his offspring, the Jacobin societies, at once directed, not only as a field where their operations against the administration might be carried on with success, but as an avenue to the west, through which *other* intended movements must proceed. And, now, in the summer of 1794, their "first ripe fruits," as Washington termed them, broke out in open rebellion. Throughout the spring, disturbances had been alarmingly frequent, and it became evident that the disaffection was spreading widely. Occurrences at the west had already given birth to the suspicion that some connection existed between the

late movements in that quarter and the insurrectionary spirit in western Pennsylvania, which was the natural entrance to the Ohio valley. The patience of government, after many efforts to appease the malcontents, being exhausted, and justice requiring that protection should be given to the officers and to the well disposed citizens who had suffered abuse, it was resolved to proceed decisively with prosecutions. Accordingly, in July, a number of writs were issued, and the marshal despatched to make service of them. While engaged in Alleghany county on this duty, he was fired upon. The next day, the house of the inspector, General Neville, in the vicinity of Pittsburg, was attacked, but the rioters were, for the moment, repulsed. Protection was in vain demanded from the civil authorities and the officers of the militia. They answered that, in consequence of the general combination, none could be afforded. On the 17th, the house was again attacked by a larger force, and, although defended by a detachment from the garrison at Pittsburgh, was taken and burnt. The marshal and inspector were obliged to escape from Pittsburgh by night. The effect of this transaction was electrical. The whole of the western part of Pennsylvania was at once in a blaze, and the excitement extended into Virginia. Liberty poles were erected, seditious handbills circulated, and armed meetings held; all occupation, even the course of law, was suspended; in a word, the country was in a state of rebellion.

An outbreak so violent had been alike unforeseen and undesired by those of the original instigators, whose object had only extended to the political embarrassment of the government. An armed insurrection (at this time at least) they had not calculated upon, and those who had expected to rule the storm, became themselves alarmed at its fury. The attitude now assumed by the President, undoubtedly had its effect in deciding their course. These with others, who although opposed to the excise law, had

never dreamed of more than a proper expression of their opinions, and the exercise of their influence in effecting its repeal, saw the necessity of immediate interposition. The class of men too, who had expected a simultaneous movement in the country west of the Alleghany range, by which a separation from the confederacy would have been brought about, and an independent government instituted, finding their plans thwarted by want of concert, desired a pacification until they should further ripen. But there were some not so disposed. Leaders were soon found willing to proceed to extremities, men of desperate fortunes, who perhaps feared that they were already too deeply committed for retreat, and perceived their only safety in general insurrection. A few days after the burning of the inspector's house, the mails were seized, under the direction it is said, of Bradford, that the names of those friendly to the government might be detected. A large meeting of the militia, summoned by order from the four counties, was then held at Braddock's field, from whence they marched to Pittsburgh, and were only prevented from the most desperate measures, by the address of a few, who pretending to act with them, contrived to avert any further outrage than the burning of a barn, and the banishment of the individuals, whose letters had contained information. This was followed on the 11th of August by a general convention, held at Parkinson's ferry, at which 260 delegates, some of them from Virginia, were present, and a much greater number of spectators. An open, armed resistance of the government was here boldly advocated, and a committee of safety proposed "to call out the resources of the northern counties, to repel any attempts against the rights of the citizens, or the body of the people." This counsel, desperate as it was, would have prevailed, but for the employment of means similar to those which had parried the intended objects of the Braddock's field meeting. The inhabitants generally

were disposed to violence, the leaders were reckless, and by inflammatory harangues had worked up the temper of their followers to their utmost wishes; the delegates generally were of the same mind. But there were among the latter several men of talents, and possessed of the confidence of the people, of personal popularity, well known to have been among the early opponents of the law, and coinciding in political views with the majority of the insurgents, who had perceived that the influence which had stimulated sedition, must now be used to avert its effects. Their task was a difficult one. It is always easier to excite than to moderate the passions of a mob, and it was requisite to keep up the semblance of a concurrence in the wildest designs of the insurgents, in order to preserve the power to prevent their execution. Thus while their address was exerted in favor of order, the pretended countenance of these delegates, in fact, gave apparent weight to the rebellion itself. They encountered also the double risk, that their motives would be discovered by the people, and that they would not be appreciated elsewhere. The efforts of these gentlemen however were successful in preventing the immediate declaration of hostilities, and in the meantime there was an intervention from another quarter. As soon as it was discovered that neither the civil force, nor the local militia, could be depended on for the maintenance of order, that the property, and even the lives of those who were willing to obey the law were not safe; that force was now absolutely requisite, harsher measures were adopted. On the 7th of August a requisition was sent to the governors of Pennsylvania and the adjoining states, for quotas of militia, and a proclamation issued to the insurgents, requiring their immediate dispersion. In order however, that no effort should be left untried to avert bloodshed, commissioners were dispatched both by the President and Governor Mifflin, offering a general amnesty, on condition of a peaceable submission.

These commissioners arrived during the meeting of the convention; a communication was opened with them by the individuals before mentioned, committees were appointed, and an adjournment of the convention brought about, during which matters should be arranged. The heads of the insurgents, however, began to suspect the drift of their proceedings, and had nearly succeeded in thwarting them. A general acceptance of the amnesty was prevented within the prescribed time, the insurrectionary spirit still continued at its height, the well disposed were awed by threats, and it was perceived that the actual march of the army, which was now collected, could alone effectually restore quiet. Accordingly on the twenty-fifth of September, it was ordered to proceed; the direction being left by the President with Mr. Hamilton, who fulfilled his task with ability and moderation. The flight of the principal leader removed the great obstacle to a pacification, and a general submission followed the arrival of the militia. A number of arrests were made, a few obscure persons convicted (all however subsequently pardoned) and a small body of troops left during the winter as a precautionary measure.

Thus was terminated a rebellion, which at one time threatened the most disastrous consequences to the nation; one to which foreign intrigue had supplied a stimulus, and party spirit had given strength; an insurrection which had a far deeper than its apparent motive, springs of action that were not then fully ascertained. The published writings of Washington show the part which the Jacobin societies had played in furthering it; its secret history however was written by another hand—that of the French minister. Mr. Jefferson in his letters took great pains to ridicule the force employed in its suppression, as grossly disproportioned to the object; but other members of the same party, leading men, who had accompanied the army into Pennsylvania, were of opinion that a less

force would have been inadequate. Mr. Jefferson's opinions on the subject of insurrections, are however known to have been peculiar. Of Shay's rebellion in Massachusetts, he had said, "God forbid we should even be twenty years without such a rebellion. The people cannot be all and always well informed. The part which is wrong will be discontented in proportion to the importance of the facts they misconceive. If they remain quiet under such misconceptions, it is a lethargy, the forerunner of death to the public liberty. We have had thirteen states independent for eleven years. There has been one rebellion. That comes to one rebellion in a century and a half for each state. What country before ever existed a century and a half without a rebellion? And what country can preserve its liberties, if its rulers are not warned from time to time, that the people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to facts, pardon and pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and of tyrants. It is its natural manure." Without commenting on the accuracy of his arithmetic, or the tendency of his principles, it is sufficient to observe that tyranny on the one side, and patriotism on the other, are not necessarily the causes, or the concomitants of rebellion. That Jefferson did not look with greater reprobation upon the insurrection of Pennsylvania, than on that of Massachusetts, was shrewdly suspected at the time, and the tenor of his correspondence has not removed the grounds of the imputation. Very differently did the federalists view the merits of treason. The language of one of them, uttered on the same occasion as the sentiment just quoted of Mr. Jefferson, conveys their, and according to historical experience, the more accurate theory of rebellion in republics. "The crime of levying war against the state," said Mr. Ames, "is attended with particular ag-

gravations and dangers in this country. Our government has no armed force; it subsists by the supposed approbation of the majority; the first murmurs of sedition excite doubts of that approbation; timid, credulous and ambitious men concur to magnify the danger. In such a government the danger is real as soon as it is dreaded. No sooner is the standard of rebellion displayed, than men of desperate principles and fortunes resort to it; the pillars of government are shaken, the edifice totters from its centre, the foot of a child may overthrow it, the hands of giants cannot rebuild it."

It is worth while to notice in illustration of the fact, that public characters sometimes regard differently the dangers of rebellion against their own rule, and those the tendency or design of which is to elevate them, that Mr. Jefferson, a few years after thought the design of Mr. Burr, whatever it was, of sufficient importance to apply to Congress for a suspension of the habeas corpus act, and this too, when the whole force of Burr did not exceed one hundred men, and General Wilkinson was on the spot with a body of regular troops.

Mr. Hamilton having been directed to attend the army in person, committed to Wolcott the management of the department during his absence, as acting Secretary of the Treasury.

FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

Treasury Department, 29th September, 1794.

Sir,

Being about to leave the seat of government for a few weeks, to accompany the army in its march against the western insurgents of Pennsylvania, I commit to you during my absence the management of those matters which are reserved to my superintendance, under the constitution and regulations of the department, especially the receipts and expenditures of money, and I rely upon your diligence and zeal that nothing will suffer during my absence.

With regard to remissions and mitigations of penalties and forfeitures, it will be best to avoid acting in any case in which particular inconvenience will not arise from delay, as there is not time to explain the principles which have gov-

erned in the past, and the course of policy may, without such explanation, be innovated upon, so as to occasion something like inconsistency. But in urgent cases you will act, consulting the most recent precedents in similar cases. To preserve the usual forms, I have signed and left in my office a large number of blank warrants of the different kinds which issue. Inclosed is a letter to the President and Directors of the Bank of New York. If they agree to the loan you will conclude it. You will find in the office a power from the President for the purpose. It will be regular in any contract which may be made to pursue the terms of the power as to parties. With great consideration and esteem, I am sir, your obedient servant.

A. HAMILTON.

## TO FREDERICK WOLCOTT.

PHILADELPHIA, July 26th, 1794.

* * * *

Every letter must have some politics ; mine shall inform you of an insurrection in the western parts of Pennsylvania against the revenue laws. The Irishmen in that quarter have at length proceeded to great extremities. The houses, barns, granaries &c., of General Neville, Inspector for the Western Survey, have been burned and several persons have been killed. The Marshal is supposed to be a prisoner and every circumstance indicates that we must have a contest with these madmen. Nothing can be more ungrateful and wicked than their conduct. The expense of the western war chiefly on their account and of other disaffected persons, is nearly two millions per annum. Notwithstanding which attempts are constantly made to involve this country with the Six Nations, Great Britain and the Spaniards, every indignity and insult is offered to those who are charged with the public business and with all this the people absolutely refuse to pay one shilling towards the public service. These men are so licentious and so vain of their consequence that they consider the blood and treasure of the United States as their property. They arrogantly demand the public protection, and at the same time refuse to perform any of their duties to society. I trust however, that they will be chastised or rejected from the union. The latter will not however be allowed without a vigorous contest. Tell Mr. Tracy of this news, and that the mischief is done by the constituents of his friends Smilie and Findley.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, July 27th, 1794.

* * * *

The late intelligence from the western quarter of Pennsylvania is of a disagreeable nature. It seems that there is a pretty general combination of the people to oppose the Revenue Laws. A valuable property of General Neville, the Inspector has been burnt, as also the distillery of a man who was disposed to

submit to the law. The Marshal of the United States has also been compelled to desist from executing the law. It is pretty evident that this government is not the best calculated to meet such opposition; yet it must be done or the authority of the laws will be universally contemned.

The conduct of these people is most unreasonable, but it is a specimen of what we are to expect from European emigrants. Pennsylvania need not be envied her Irishmen; they will hasten the period for regulations to which they are most averse.

PHILADELPHIA, August 16th, 1794.

This day I received a letter from Mr. Trumbull, Secretary to our Minister, Mr. Jay, dated June 23d, by which, and by a gentleman who brought the letter, I am informed that as far as can be judged from the conversation of merchants interested in American affairs, there was reason to hope a favourable issue to his mission. The minister is said to have assured the merchants that they may safely prosecute trade with this country, and that the British government are desirous of continuing on good terms with us.

A better pledge than the declaration of the minister, may perhaps be found in the late brilliant success of the French in Flanders, who are said to have made themselves masters of Ypres, the only strong city in that quarter, with a garrison of 7000 men. The Count Clairfait in vain attempted to relieve this place, and after several bloody contests has retired to Ghent. By this, Ostend and Bruges are laid open to the power of the French, and hardly any expectation remains that the allies will be able to retain any of their conquests in Flanders. These successes have been owing to a great increase of the French armies by new levies from the second requisition. On the Rhine the French have lost ground, though not in an important degree.

The Poles are making a powerful diversion to the northward and opening a new scene of carnage, in which there is some reason to believe the Danes, Swedes, Turks and Russians will participate. On the frontiers of Italy and Spain the French are victorious. It is even asserted that Turin has fallen into their hands. The Chesapeake fleet, of which various reports have been published, is known to have arrived safe.

In our own country every thing appears tolerably quiet, except in the western quarter of Pennsylvania, where the insurgents are proceeding to destroy the property and banish all those who are well disposed towards the laws. The views of these men cannot be certainly known as yet. A convention was to meet yesterday, but even if their deliberations are known generally, some particulars may be concealed. I have no doubt that this insurrection proceeds from a faction which has long been aiming to shake the measures of the government, and though most men will reprobate the outrages which have been committed, many will endeavour to prevent the spirit of insurrection from being humbled. I hope the business will terminate well; at any rate it will afford an opportunity for reflecting men to form a true judgment of the ground upon which our affairs stand, and a true knowledge on this subject will not a little contribute to the public security

You have seen that the President will call out the militia. Indeed, I have no doubt that if necessary, the whole force of the country will be employed.

## FROM COL. JOHN TRUMBULL.

LONDON, August 20th, 1794.

Dear Sir,

I have received not a line from you since my arrival, although, if my memory be correct, you promised me that favor. I have written to you twice before this. Another great change in men has taken place in Paris. Robespierre and his friends have fallen on the same scaffold to which he had led so many others. A change of measures was expected by people here, but none takes place ; the people and the armies seem not to lose their confidence in the convention, bad as many think them ; and no disturbance that we hear as yet, has taken place in any quarter. The armies of the allies are in every place unsuccessful. Within a few days, Treves is taken by the French, after defeating the army of Austrians who protected it. This lays open the Rhine, and will oblige the Prince de Cobourg to fall back from Maestricht, in which case that place is the next to fall, and Holland will be exposed. Poland, although not in a fair way to succeed for themselves, have operated a most important diversion for the French. The fleets of the Baltic begin now to excite some speculation. Our affairs have not a worse aspect than some time since, yet not so good as to induce me to repeat less earnestly than I have always done, the necessity of preparing with energy for the worst. Remember me to the little woman and to the little little one. I am faithfully yours,

JNO. TRUMBULL.

## FROM OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

WINDSOR, Aug. 24, 1794.

Dear Sir,

I received your interesting letter of the 12th two days since. The use of military force against the insurgents, I believe to be indispensable, and a measure in which the Executive may rely on the approbation and steady support of Connecticut and of New England generally. As to a call on the militia of this state, it certainly should not take place, unless it appears that a force deemed adequate cannot be obtained nearer. And, indeed, I should think it best to make one experiment with such of the militia of Pennsylvania and the adjoining states that have been called on, as shall be turned out ; and if it should prove unsuccessful, to depend ultimately on a force to be differently organized, and officered and raised by enlistment for a longer time than the present militia can well be kept from home. Men enough could, doubtless, soon be raised in this way, on reasonable terms, in the eastern quarter, if not elsewhere, to do the work as it ought to be done. The intervention of a legislative act might be necessary, and the way, I think, would be prepared for passing it.

Should the Executive, however, who seldom mistakes, and as we believe, never,

judge it expedient to call for a detachment of the Connecticut militia, a call a few weeks hence would be less inconvenient for them than at present; but little time would be necessary to prepare. As to compensation—the soul of patriotism—they have been accustomed, as you know, to as much pay, or the assurance of it as their time was supposed to be worth—the privates about $40 per month, which they would the more expect in a tour that they should conceive not to be properly their own, but to result from the delinquency of others. This assurance, if it cannot be seasonably given by government, it might perhaps be expedient and practicable to obtain from a few individuals. There would, I trust, be found here, no objection to the nature of the service, nor any want of fidelity.

You may make so much use of my letter as your discretion shall dictate. Pray, keep me well informed of this rebellion, which I hope to see brought to a good issue. And tell me as much as you may of what Mr. Jay writes—I think the two subjects are related. I am, dear sir, &c.

OLIV. ELLSWORTH.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., Sept. 23d, 1794.

I have received your favor of Sept. 1, which I should have answered had I not been exceedingly busy and had I not supposed that the papers contained good information of the progress of affairs.

The attempt of the commissioners to pacify the insurgents has essentially failed in respect to its main object. The measure, has, however, had good effects in this quarter, by silencing the adherents of the rebels, and by dividing their party in the western country. The advantage in the last respect is not, however, of great consequence, and is purchased at some expense. All the great rogues who began the mischief have submitted, and become partizans of government. Findley, Smilie, Gallatin, &c., are of this class. The principles of justice and policy required that these men should be hanged; but as they have deserted their party, the punishment will fall upon persons less criminal and influential.

The disaffection to coercive measures has been, for a short period of time, somewhat alarming; but all danger is now over. The men of property and influence have awaked, and the military spirit is now sufficiently active. Several bodies of horse and infantry have marched from this city, composed of the principal citizens. The same is the case from New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia.

We believe, though no official accounts have been received, that General Wayne has obtained a decisive victory over the Indians. If our accounts are accurate, we shall have little more trouble from the Indian war.

The last advices from Mr. Jay announce nothing conclusive. A change which had taken place in the administration, and the pressing events of the war, had occasioned a momentary pause in the negotiation. Nothing to discourage our expectations of a favorable result had happened; on the contrary, general appearances were flattering. It appears, however, that we ought not to be sanguine.

The prospect of peace in Europe is said to be as remote as ever.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 25th, 1794.

I have the pleasure to acknowledge your letter of the 18th, and I am happy to find so good an evidence of the stability and good sense of the people of Connecticut as they have given in their late election. Public appointments, especially to Congress, will require great sacrifices by men who are in business, but they must not be declined in the present critical state of our country. The force which has marched, is abundantly sufficient to reduce the insurgents, but every step which has been taken evinces the necessity of the measures adopted. It is an unfortunate fact, but it is true, that the politics of this state are very unsound.

Europe is hastening to ruin; the Dutch will probably resign themselves to their fate without any great struggle. This I hear in a way which I credit. Exchange was, by the last advices, about 16 per cent. in favour of London against Amsterdam—a proof of extreme terror and dejection in the people of property. We have reason to fear that the French have reversed the plan of commercial depredation. Several of our vessels trading to the British dominions have been captured and carried into France. We must, however, persist in the idea that we will not engage in the war. Mr. Jay's mission will probably issue favourably, but it is not safe to encourage sanguine expectations.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 31, 1794.

I have received your favour of October 27. The result of the nomination is a pretty good proof of the present stability of the State. The next election will, I think, confirm the present magistracy in their places. Notwithstanding I am confident the sense and virtue of the people afford present grounds for confidence, yet it is certain that the next age will materially differ from the present. The fuel for an explosion is doubtless prepared; our public happiness must of necessity be exposed to the risque attending great revolutions of manners and opinions. Whatever may be said by faction and malevolence at present, the wise of future times will cite the characters of the present age as the best examples of republican virtue.

Col. Hamilton is with the militia army and will not return in some weeks. I am of course uncommonly busy.

## FROM JOEL BARLOW.

HAMBURGH, Nov. 6, 1794.

My Dear Friend,

I have been very happy in receiving your favor of the 9th June, which came to France by Mr. Monroe. Your other, by Mr. Trumbull, I received and answered in September. I am much rejoiced at the description you give of the state of society in America, and the great prosperity which has followed the establishment of the present government. The men of information, in all places that I have visited, consider that country as the happiest in the world. The nu-

merous emigrations from those parts of Europe where America is best known, and the strain of contentment and exultation in which the emigrants describe their situation, have great influence in confirming this opinion. I have no doubt but that the state of society and the principles and administration of the government, are such in that country as to furnish a great and useful example to the world. Neither do I doubt that the event of the French revolution will be such as to offer us much for imitation in our turn. I do not mean that a revolution, or anything like it, will be necessary with us, but that many principles for the general diffusion of information, the preservation and improvement of morals, and the encouragement of such a degree of equality in the condition of men as tends to their dignity and happiness, will certainly be established by them and will be equally necessary for us. I know that you and some of my other friends, whose friendship is dear to me, and whose opinions I value almost as much as truth itself, consider my head as turned with these ideas. Perhaps it is, and perhaps it will be set right when I come among you; but had you seen and felt what I have, I am confident you would have been of my opinion.

I find that you and some others express an expectation that I should attempt something like a history of the French revolution. I really did not intend it. I considered that as it would be written by so many others, and in a manner much more agreeable to the generality of readers than that in which I should treat it, it would be better for me, as well as for the world, that I should be silent. But I am not sure of being able to adhere to this resolution. It is an event of such an extraordinary nature, as scarcely to stand a chance of being treated impartially by its friends or enemies. Though I cannot call myself an indifferent spectator, I might, perhaps, be able to trace the causes of things with more coolness than some others who have attempted or will attempt it. Give my best respects to Tracy, Gilbert, Trumbull, and other friends with you. God bless you,

JOEL BARLOW.

At this time, and during the whole of Wolcott's residence in Philadelphia, his situation, though involving laborious duties, was in a high degree delightful. A society at that time existed there, marked by every characteristic which could recommend it to one of a cultivated mind and social disposition, embracing much of the genius, the worth, and no little of the wit and beauty of the country, and cemented by mutual confidence and congeniality of opinions and pursuits. Of this society, two members of Wolcott's family, his younger sister and his wife, were themselves no inconspicuous ornaments. The former, married to the Hon. Chauncey Goodrich, was dis-

tinguished for her personal beauty and brilliant conversation; Mrs. Wolcott, with less beauty, had still a countenance of much loveliness, and manners graceful and dignified. To the most feminine gentleness of disposition, she added sound sense, and that kind of cultivation which is acquired in intercourse with thinkers. Both belonged to a class of women of whom Connecticut could then boast many, whose minds were formed, and habits of reflection directed by *men;* and without coming within the category of female politicians, they had been almost from childhood familiar with questions of public and general interest. An anecdote of Mr. Tracy, whose sarcasms were of old dreaded alike in the Senate chamber and the drawing-room, has been preserved, commemorative at once of Mrs. Wolcott's attraction and his own peculiar wit. Mr. Liston, who succeeded Mr. Hammond as British Minister at Philadelphia, and who was thoroughly English in his ideas, on some occasion remarked to him—"Your countrywoman, Mrs. Wolcott, would be admired even at St. James'." "Sir," retorted the Senator from Connecticut, "she is admired even on Litchfield Hill!"

The late Hon. Joseph Hopkinson, himself one of the brightest ornaments of that circle, in a letter speaking of Wolcott's associates, says: "During his residence in Philadelphia, the division of political parties in their social intercourse was more decided than it has ever been since. His associates, therefore, were almost exclusively with the federal members of the administration and of Congress, together with families residing in the city, of the same politics, which then certainly constituted the best society of the city. In his parlor, of an evening, you would meet more or less company of that description. Leading members of the Senate and House of Representatives, especially from New England, were habitually there, and sometimes at my house. When I mention such names as Ellsworth, Ames, Griswold, Goodrich,

Tracy, &c., you may imagine what a rich and intellectual society it was. I will not say that we have no such men now, but I don't know where they are."

In the same letter occur these remarks upon Wolcott's private character: "Mr. Wolcott was a man of cheerful and even a playful disposition. His conversation was interesting and earnest, but gay, unless the occasion was unfit for gaiety. He enjoyed a good joke from himself or another, and his laugh was hearty and frequent. He delighted in the discussion of literary subjects and the works of distinguished authors, and was particularly fond of poetry. Indeed, I understood that in his younger days he was a poet. He had a good taste in literature with one exception, about which we often disputed, and in which his New England attachments or prejudices controlled his judgment. He had an excessive admiration of Dr. Dwight's 'Conquest of Canaan.' His domestic life was most exemplary; his greatest happiness was in his family, with the friends who congregated there. His devotion to the business and duties of his office was severe and unremitting. He posessed, in a high degree, a very rare qualification—the capacity for continued hard work, and was in everything systematic and orderly. His attachments to his friends were strong and lasting, never taxing them with unreasonable exactions or subjecting them to unpleasant caprices. He was open and direct in all his dealings, without duplicity or intrigue in anything; his sincerity was sure, he deceived nobody."

# CHAPTER VII.

THIRD CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION.

During the summer, Gen. Wayne, who had been appointed to command the army in the northwest, had obtained a decisive victory over the Indians on the Miamis, and had ravaged their county. The effect of this advantage was to put an end to the war in that quarter.

The negociations abroad had proceeded with various successes, but without any definite conclusion. Mr. Monroe arrived in France in the month of July, a few days after the execution of Robespierre, and thus described the condition of things in that country: "On my arrival here, I found our affairs, as it was known before I sailed, in the worst possible situation. The treaty between the two republics was violated; our commerce was harrassed in every quarter and in every article—even that of tobacco not excepted; our seamen often abused, generally imprisoned and treated in other respects like the subjects of the powers at war with them." The new change of rulers did not change the policy of France abroad, or the character of the revolution at home. That revolution was described with equal justice and point, when Ames termed it "a despotism of the mob or military from the first, hypocrisy of morals to the last." Its objects were the same at every stage—the system of rapine, aggression and insult was pursued by each successive administration, and to their infamy it must be said, that each was

in its turn justified and defended by the anti-federalists of America. No outrage on the part of France could rouse the indignation, even the remonstrance of those whose patriotic fervor thought that war alone could atone for the offences of Great Britain, and that a treaty with her, however satisfactory, was beneath the dignity of a republic. The death of Robespierre had, however, one good effect—it involved the downfall of his supporters, the Jacobin societies, and that of the parasitical clubs of America followed as a consequence. In regard to Great Britain, it was understood that Mr. Jay was making progress in negociating a treaty which would settle most, if not all of the points of controversy. A favorable opportunity offering, Mr. Thomas Pinckney was, soon after the opening of the session, detached to the Spanish court as envoy extraordinary, to conclude a treaty with that government. The prospects of peace were thus generally improving, notwithstanding the temper of the opposition. Mr. John Quincy Adams had been commissioned Minister Resident to the United Netherlands in May, and was now confirmed.

The speech was delivered on the 19th of November. The President detailed at some length the history of the opposition to the laws in Pennsylvania, and the measures finally adopted to enforce submission, alluding to the Jacobin clubs as having been instrumental in fomenting the insurrection. A reform in the militia laws, the necessity of which had been shown by the events of the summer, and the adoption of a definitive plan for the redemption of the national debt, were recommended. On the 15th of December, a committee, of which Mr. Smith of South Carolina was chairman, reported a plan for this purpose. The report stated that the surplus of existing revenues, beyond the probable expenditures of 1795 and the succeeding years, would enable the legislature to commence during that year, and to continue thereafter, the payment of that portion of the public debt which the government

had a right to redeem. An appropriation was recommended out of the revenues of 1795 of a sum not exceeding $600,000, to be applied to the payment of two dollars on every hundred of the six per cent. stock, bearing a then present interest; an extension of the duties which were merely temporary to the year 1801, and the making provisions for the sale of lands in the western territory. On the 21st of January, the Secretary of the Treasury transmitted a plan for the support of PUBLIC CREDIT, based on the actual revenues, and on the 2d of February, one for the IMPROVEMENT OF THE REVENUE. The first report reviewed all the previous legislation upon the subject of public credit, considering it under the three heads of the revenues which had been established, the provisions for funding the debt and payment of interest upon it, and for reimbursing and extinguishing the principal. After exhibiting a summary of results, the following propositions were submitted, which appeared necessary to complete the financial system, accompanied by a commentary on each, viz:—provisions with regard to the yet unsubscribed debt of the United States; for taking on a loan, the unbarred new emission bills of credit; for converting, the whole of the foreign into domestic debt; for rendering permanent the temporary duties on imports and pledging them to the sinking fund; additional provisions for reimbursing and redeeming the public debt; giving power to the commissioners of the sinking fund to borrow in anticipation of appropriated revenues; continuing and appropriating the internal revenues; creating a surplus fund; consolidating the revenue pledged to the redemption of the debt and with the consent of the creditors; abolishing priorities of appropriation; and calling in the outstanding loan office and final settlement certificates and indents of interest.

The report on the improvement of the revenue entered at large into the consideration of the objects and principles

of taxation generally, and the alterations required in the existing laws. Its leading idea was a change from *ad valorem* to specific duties.

These justly celebrated reports were the last official communications of Mr. Hamilton. His resignation had been for some time intended, but was delayed by various circumstances. The investigations into his conduct had concluded in a triumphant vindication; he had brought forward the final measures of his system, and he at length found an opportunity for the retirement he had long coveted. He resigned on the last day of January, and Wolcott was appointed his successor by commission dated February 2d. General Knox had already resigned and had been succeeded by Col. Pickering. The original cabinet was thus entirely changed and now consisted of Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State, Oliver Wolcott, Jr., of the Treasury, Timothy Pickering, of War, and William Bradford, Attorney General.

The preceeding pages have presented a bare notice of the principal features of Mr. Hamilton's fiscal system. A more extended account would have been out of place, and even here any retrospect, or comment might be considered impertinent. To other hands are left the history of the debt; of its management to the time when the first secretary retired, and the defence, if such be longer necessary, of his measures. From this period however, the financial history of the country becomes a matter indispensably connected with the object of this work. The system devised by Mr. Hamilton had now it is true been developed, and had subsequent measures been always subsidiary to it, had no extraneous causes interfered with its course, had the same views been consistently observed by the legislature and measures in pursurance adopted, the results under his successor would prove of easy and brief statement. But an uninterrupted course of measures was not to be expected when parties differed

so widely in policy and when extraneous events were daily occuring, additionally to endanger its success. To mark the degree in which the end was pursued or neglected, the causes which delayed the extinction of the debt or embarrassed the fulfilment of the national obligations and the administration of the finances, details at length of the principal transactions in the department will be necessary. To the right comprehension of these, a general statement of its condition at this period is given.

The original foreign debt had been due to the governments of France and Spain, and to individuals in Holland. The Spanish debt, which was insignificant, had been extinguished in 1793. This and the payments made to France, previous to 1795, amounting in the whole to $8,262,000, were discharged with monies borrowed in Holland. With a small balance due to France, the Dutch debt now constituted the whole of the foreign debt.

The great mass of domestic debt, including the assumed debt and the balances due the creditor states, had now been subscribed, and the unfunded debt was thus reduced to a comparatively small sum. With this diminution, the funded debt, consisting of the six per cent., deferred and three per cent. stocks, of course increased. The amounts of these different species of debt as they existed on the 1st January, 1795, were according to Mr. Hamilton's report as follows:

DEBT OF THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 1, 1795.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| FOREIGN DEBT, including the instalments to be paid out of the proceeds of foreign loans in the course of the year - | | $14,599,129 35 |
| FUNDED DOMESTIC DEBT, viz: | | |
| First, arising from original domestic debt, subscribed to loan proposed by funding act: | | |
| Stock bearing present interest of 6 per ct. | $17,912,138 01 | |
| " " a future interest of 6 per ct. | 8,538,228 97 | |
| " " an interest of 3 per cent. - | 2,275,347 55 | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Second, arising from state debts assumed: | | |
| Stock bearing present interest of 6 per cent. | 7,908,374 19 | |
| Stock bearing a future interest of 6 per cent. | 3,940,608 96 | |
| Stock bearing interest of 3 per cent. - | 5,994,115 70 | |
| Third, arising from balances to creditor states: | | |
| Stock bearing a present interest of 6 per cent. | 2,345,056 00 | |
| Stock bearing a future interest of 6 per cent. | 1,172,528 00 | |
| Stock bearing an interest of 3 per cent. - | 703,516 80 | |
| | | $60,789,914 18 |
| UNSUBSCRIBED DEBT, viz: | | |
| Principal, exclusive of loan office certificates bearing interest on nominal value, - | 1,072,583 40 | |
| Interest thereupon, including indents, - | 452,826 74 | |
| Principal of loan office certificates bearing interest on nominal sum, - - - | 27,935 00 | |
| Interest thereupon, - - - | 7,830 00 | |
| | | 1,561,175 14 |
| Total of amounts above stated, - - | | $76,950,218 67 |

Besides the above proper debt, there were also outstanding the amounts of certain loans obtained from time to time, all from the Bank of the United States, except one sum borrowed of the Bank of New York. They consisted of the balance of the purchase money of the bank stock, temporary loans obtained for specific purposes, and ordinary loans in anticipation of the revenue.

Portions of these, including the third instalment of the stock loan, were reimbursed by Mr. Hamilton during the month of January. The sums outstanding at the 2d of February amounted to $4,900,000, of which the following amounts remained at the close of the year.

| | |
|---|---|
| DOMESTIC LOANS, FEBRUARY 2d, 1795, viz: | |
| Remaining unpaid of two millions borrowed under the act incorporating the Bank of the United States, bearing interest at 6 per cent. and payable in instalments of two hundred thousand dollars, on the 31st December in each year, - - - | $1,400,000 |
| Remaining unpaid of four hundred thousand dollars, borrowed under the act of May 2d, 1792, for the protection of the frontiers, bearing | |

| | |
|---|---|
| interest at 5 per cent. and payable in equal instalments, Nov. 1st, Dec. 1st, and January 1st, 1796, | 300,000 |
| Under act passed at the beginning of the present session, authorizing a loan of two millions at 5 per cent. interest, payable January 1st, 1796, | 1,000,000 |
| Under the same act, payable April 1st, 1796, | 1,000,000 |
| Under the act of March 20th, 1794, making provision for intercourse with foreign nations, (the Algerine loan) borrowed at 5 per cent. of the Bank of New York, payable June 8th, 1796, | 200,000 |
| | $3,900,000 |

In addition to these items, was also the sum of five hundred thousand dollars borrowed of the Bank of the United States in six per cent. government stock, at its par value, and remitted to Holland to be sold and applied to the payment of the instalment of foreign debt falling due in 1795, which, when applied, would of course form, to the amount of the proceeds, a reduction of the foreign debt. This will be noticed by itself. Further additions to the temporary debt were made by the acts of this session, in consequence of demands arising previous to its commencement, which will be enumerated hereafter.

The amount of funded stocks, as above stated, was, inclusive of the sums purchased, or redeemed and vested in the sinking fund, which, of course, were to be deducted from the true amount of debt due on that day. These were as follows:

STATEMENT OF PURCHASES OF PUBLIC STOCK.

| | |
|---|---|
| Six per cent. stock proper, | $668,700 38 |
| " " " assumed, | 212,462 04 |
| Three " " proper, | 415,415 66 |
| " " " assumed, | 99,444 97 |
| Deferred six per cent. proper, | 752,190 64 |
| " " " assumed, | 119,808 88 |
| Total stock redeemed, | $2,268,022 57 |

As resources counterbalancing the amount of temporary debt, were the bank shares, the specie in the treasury

subject to warrants, and the amount of uncollected bonds at the custom houses. In the reports on the debt made by the Treasury to Congress from time to time, it should be borne in mind, apparent variations will appear, both as to the amounts and different species of the debt existing at the same periods. These arose from the different principles on which the statements were made to elucidate different facts, and not from discrepancies in the statements themselves. Thus, for the purpose of showing the amount of interest payable on the several capitals of debt, the amount of funded stocks is sometimes given *inclusive* of that held by the sinking fund belonging to the United States itself. At other times, the same stocks are stated *less* the amount redeemed, for the purpose of showing merely the principal sum to be paid. In the same way, in stating the amount of debts existing at a particular period, the stocks are sometimes stated at the amount which had actually been subscribed on that day; at others, at the amount due at the period which had been funded up to the day of statement. Again, the debt remaining due to the bank for the purchase of stock, is sometimes stated and the value of the stock offset against it; at other times, both are omitted; and the temporary loans in anticipation of the revenue, are in like manner mentioned, with the outstanding bonds at the custom houses opposed to them, or both are passed over; lastly, the small debt due to certain foreign officers is sometimes mentioned, at others neglected as being offset by the amount of specie in the treasury belonging to the foreign fund, on which it was an outstanding demand. All these variations were perfectly understood. The principles on which these and other statements were made, will be from time to time noticed in the course of the work.

The following were the estimated current revenues and the usual stated expenditures of the United States, not including on the one hand extraordinary appropriations

by Congress, nor on the other resources obtained from foreign and domestic loans, repayments into the treasury, or funds derived from other uncertain sources. They are not to be confounded with the estimates for the actual year, which were somewhat different, being merely intended to exhibit the ordinary scale of expenditure.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ESTIMATED CURRENT REVENUE: | | | |
| *Appropriated.* | | *Permanent.* | |
| Duties on imports and tonnage, | | $4,199,791 67 | |
| Duties on distilled spirits, &c., | | 400,000 00 | |
| Fees on patents, | | 660 00 | |
| *Unappropriated.* | | | |
| Postage of letters, | | 29,722 16 | |
| Surplus dividends on bank stock, | | 62,500 00 | |
| | | | $4,692,673 83 |
| | | *Temporary.* | |
| Temporary duties on imports, | | 1,479,626 91 | |
| Excise on snuff, refined sugar, sales at auction, &c., &c., | | 380,000 00 | 1,859,626 91 |
| Total current revenue, | | | $6,552,300 74 |
| ESTIMATED CURRENT EXPENDITURE: | | | |
| Interest on the foreign debt, | | | $638,480 58 |
| Interest on domestic funded debt, | | | 2,339,241 50 |
| Interest on unfunded debt, | | | 66,031 10 |
| Interest on temporary loans, | | | 100,000 00 |
| Expenses of civil government, including foreign intercourse, | | | 475,249 53 |
| Expenses of military land service, | | | 1,511,975 29 |
| Expenses of military naval service, | | | 441,508 80 |
| Miscellany, | | | 109,357 04 |
| Total annual expenditure, | | | $5,681,843 84 |

A very great adventitious importance had been given to the treasury department, during the time that Hamilton filled its first office, and one that can rarely if ever recur. The principles that divided the two parties were more inseparably connected with the financial, than with any other acts of the government. State sovereignty, or national sovereignty, was bound up in each successive measure; the assumption of a debt, the creation of a bank, the

imposition of a tax involved questions of infinite political moment, and it was only when these should be fully established, that the treasury could take its natural level in point of importance. The erection of a fiscal system in the face of so violent and powerful opposition, of such conflicting interests and inveterate prejudices, and of the obstacles which an imperfect knowledge of our resources, and erroneous opinions on financial subjects offered; required a union of qualities rarely found. It had not been therefore merely as the head of a department, that Hamilton's talents were required or exercised. He had brought the whole of his vast mental resources and political influence to bear upon every fundamental maxim of government. On every subject he had been a counsellor, to whose opinion weight was attached, both by the President and the nation, and he had become as it were identified with the principles of the federal party. But during the six years which had elapsed since the formation of the new government, most of the relations which were likely to arise had been discussed and settled, and a general adherence to those principles could now be expected, at least during the continuance of that party in power. His successor therefore would have an easier task. Wolcott certainly possessed the qualifications requisite for a minister of finance. He had not, it is true, the brilliant qualities of genius, but he had a comprehensive and well regulated mind, a judgment matured and reliable, strong practical good sense and native shrewdness. He fully entered into the system devised by his predecessor; he was well acquainted with the resources of the country, and with the views and interests of its different sections, thoroughly versed in the duties of his office, capable of continuous application, and strictly business-like in his habits. To this it may be added, that although not deficient in originality or boldness, he had no favorite schemes to engraft on that which was perfect in itself; he had no desire to

obtain a shining reputation, and little ambition, other than to fill honorably an honorable station.

For the rest he possessed unflinching resolution, and an integrity of character beyond the power of temptation; he could never bend even in appearance from what he considered right. No idea of expediency, no hope of attaining a cherished object ever made him swerve from his path; he was in every matter of principle stern and uncompromising. He was far from sanguine, often almost desponding in his opinions of the prospects of the country, but he always looked to the people themselves, as the source from which, if at all, its welfare and security must spring. To the institutions and character of New England he was in particular attached. On them in his view depended mainly the stability of the Union, and the preservation of that which made it of value. He believed that the greatest danger to which we were exposed arose, not from the strength but from the weakness of the general government, that the principle of union was not strong enough to resist the power of the states and the tendencies of the age. The obstacles which had attended the formation of a constitution, the perils which had since threatened it, the attitude of defiance assumed on more than one occasion by individual members, the strength and determination of its enemies, and the recklessness with which they availed themselves of every weapon; finally, the prevalence which the anarchical principles of French democracy had obtained, and the difficulty with which they were resisted, were to his mind convincing evidence of this fact. But he felt that the danger must be encountered not by legislation, not by force, but by reason; that attachment to the government must spring from a sense of its worth, and that upon the attachment of the people the continuance of a free government must ever depend. Towards Great Britain he entertained a dislike amounting to hatred; a sentiment which he had imbibed in boyhood,

and which he carried with him to the grave; but he knew that the charges of British influence and British predilictions were equally frivolous and absurd, that the imputations of monarchical principles as regarded the federal party were false; that the national animosity against England would prevent the exercise of any such influence, and that the whole character of our people secured us from any danger of monarchy. Not so did he think of France and French influence. He dreaded the effect of the political theories to which their revolution had given birth, and the intrigues which for their own purposes they had extended to this country; he saw moreover that the direction which had been given to our national prejudices by the opposition, was intended simply to carry out their design of breaking down the general government, and while he never justified or palliated the aggressions of Great Britain, he looked upon France as the country from which we most needed defence. With these views he considered that peace with England, if it could be preserved with honor, was a point of vital importance. The grounds for war were common to both nations, the objections to a war with either were great. At all events, negotiation was to be tried to remove the causes of complaint before a resort was had to arms. Such were his opinions with respect to the government and its policy.

Wolcott brought no addition of political strength into the cabinet, had this been sought. His employment from so early a period in subordinate official services, had withdrawn him entirely from those fields of action where men gain personal popularity; but he did bring what at that time was perhaps equally valuable, the entire confidence of many, who themselves occupied a high and deserved rank in the public regard. Mr. Hamilton retained, notwithstanding the termination of his own responsibility, a deep interest in public affairs, and his correspondence with Wolcott shows his cordial and ready coöperation in

removing the difficulties presented by the critical nature of the times, to the successful administration of the national finances. They are valuable for the soundness of their political morality, as well as for the wisdom of their statesmanship.

The other members of the cabinet require a brief notice. Mr. Randolph's professional character and political standing in Virginia, are mentioned with distinction by Chief-Justice Marshall, in speaking of the constitution of the first cabinet. While Attorney General he had on almost every occasion sided with Mr. Jefferson, but without provoking the same personal feeling. After his appointment as Secretary of State, when removed from the actual influence of his predecessor, he appears to have acted with moderation upon political questions, and often in harmony with the federal members of the cabinet, but in almost every instance some vacillation, or unsteadiness of purpose destroyed the effect of his opinions or advice, and he thus incurred the suspicions of his friends, while he failed in securing the confidence of their adversaries. He seems to have considered himself as occupying a neutral, or independent position, a dangerous one in times of high party excitement for any man holding a responsible official station, whose influence is not powerful, whose talents are not commanding, and whose character is not beyond attack. Thus Mr. Randolph, instead of being of no party, was of either by turns, and often on the same question. His inconsistencies were curiously enumerated by Mr. Jefferson after Randolph's resignation, who thus expresses the result. "The fact is, he has generally given his principles to one party, and his practice to the other; the oyster to one and the shell to the other. Unfortunately the shell was generally the lot of his friends, the French and republicans, and the oyster of their antagonists. * * Whether his conduct is to be ascribed to a superior view of things, and adherence to right without

regard to party, as he pretends, or an anxiety to trim between both, those who knew his character and capacity will decide." [a]

Col. Pickering had been Postmaster-General since the organization of that office. His revolutionary services need no mention. As a cabinet officer, both as Secretary of War and in the station he afterwards held, he manifested great natural abilities and straightforward sense. He was a man of the sternest uprightness of character and most inflexible determination. One more honest and honorable never breathed; his very faults sprung from the strength and truth of his feelings. In many prominent points he resembled Wolcott, between whom and himself a close and lasting friendship was cemented, and with whom he generally coincided in opinion and political views.

Mr. Bradford had held the offices of Attorney-General and Judge of the Supreme Court in Pennsylvania, with honor. He possessed eloquence, ability and tact; but his early death prevented his becoming prominent in political life. The elegance of his manners and his gentlemanlike character rendered him personally beloved by his colleagues.

The following letter shows the modest estimate in which Wolcott held his own qualifications for the important office he now filled.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., Jan. 6, 1795.

Col. Pickering has succeeded General Knox in the War Department, and he will be found an able and respectable officer. You will hear of no complaints of profusion and extravagance even though the expenditure of the department should increase. Mr. Pickering is a plain man, of personal economy, and the public will presume that he will be economical as an officer. General Knox has been unfortunate in some respects, and has not acquired as much reputation as

[a] Letter to William B. Giles. Jeff. Wri. III. 318.

he deserves to have done. I hope his services will be hereafter appreciated according to their true merits.

The office of Secretary of the Treasury is justly viewed as of high consequence to the public; it will be found a very responsible situation, and no man can hold it without being opposed and attacked. Other qualifications than those which respect skill and capacity for the mere business of the treasury will be desirable, and in these respects a successor to Col. Hamilton will not be found. A change in the Executive Department, like what must happen, will therefore be of importance, and may explain the nature and bias of our government.

I shall take no measures for putting myself in the way of this appointment; if it is offered to me I shall accept it, and I shall certainly conduct the mere business of the department in an orderly and proper manner. Whatever may be said or done, I shall suffer no disgrace eventually, unless it shall be found that the talents of a politician, and a certain address in persuading and informing individuals and the public on certain conjunctures, are necessary qualifications. In these matters I shall be understood, if I am appointed, to have no responsibility. I have arrived at all that degree of advancement to which a man can himself lay claim—public opinion and the exigencies of the times will determine what is to be my situation hereafter. I mention these things, as it will be natural for you to feel some concern respecting me; but that is unnecessary, as I shall in any event be properly and fairly treated, and my ease and reputation consulted as far as I ought to desire.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, March 26, 1795.

Sir,

* * * Your public services are deservedly, and I believe very universally respected. The justice, wisdom, and candor of the Executive may be relied upon that you will be treated with propriety. Your ability to execute the office which it is expected you will receive, I have no doubt of; but considering the querulous and captious disposition which is manifested in the debates of Congress, it will probably render it necessary that the conduct of our officer of finance should be such as you suppose must be adopted. The debates upon the report of the late Secretary of War, discover a puerility, as well as peevishness, which would be a disgrace to schoolboys. This gentleman, during the late war, had, and I believe very deservedly, the reputation of conducting the affairs of his department with much regularity and economy. The late business of his department has been very perplexing, and in many respects new and necessarily expensive. His successor will be a man of industry and regularity in business, and probably more fortunate than he has been.

The naturalization bill has, I perceive, made considerable progress, though much resisted. Such a bill, under proper modifications, doubtless ought to be adopted; but will, in my opinion, be a very inadequate provision for our peace and security in the general wreck, which I believe will, if not directly, yet by no distant consequence take effect through all the Christian dominions of Eu-

rope. I think a constitutional provision ought immediately to be made, that none but the natives of America, except such foreigners as were in this country before the declaration of independence, and favored its principles, or such as took an active part in the war in our favor, and have lived in the country ever since the peace, ought to be admitted members of the national legislature, or be appointed to the judiciary or to the head of any of the executive departments. Such a provision will not only be a check to the emigration of those who will never do us any good, but preserve this country from that political discord which, even in its present state, is a public scandal. This is not a measure of undue asperity where names and sounds are the serious subjects of animated discussion for no other design than to answer the most nefarious purposes.

The democratical, or as some call them, the demoniacal societies, which are evidently the nurseries of sedition, and which I believe in their institution are unlawful, as they are formed for the avowed purpose of a general influence and control upon the measures of government are, I trust, sinking into contempt.

* * * Yours with the kindest regard,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

PHILA., Feb. 4th, 1795.

I have been informed through the Secretary of State that you have been pleased to appoint me to the office of Secretary of the Treasury of the United States.

It is with real diffidence that I undertake to discharge the important duties relative to this appointment; yet if constant exertions and strict fidelity can compensate for such qualifications as I may not possess, I indulge in a hope that my services will receive your approbation.

But whatever may be the effect of my endeavors in respect to my own reputation and the interests confided to my care, I beg leave to assure you that this distinguished token of confidence will never fail to excite in my breast lively sentiments of respect and gratitude.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, February 16th, 1795.

Sir,

I am happy to find it announced in the public papers that you are appointed to the office of Secretary of the Treasury, not only as it is an official honor, but as it is a public testimonial of the merit of your services and your ability to execute the trust by those whose judgment will be fully confided in. The appointment is more important and confidential than any single trust held under government, and consequently has the highest responsibility annexed to it, but I persuade myself that it will be executed by you in such manner as will fully evince the propriety of the designation. In transacting very important business

it is necessary for obtaining success that a man should not despair of his ability to effect it. In conducting a national fiscal department, it is so far as I have been informed, in certain public exigencies and upon unforeseen events for the officer to exercise some discretionary powers, in confidence that his conduct, if evidently directed to public utility, will obtain approbation, and such conduct might well be sanctioned when its consequences have been evidently beneficial.

But the exercise of such discretion is ever attended with much risque, and it will be peculiarly so under our government; when many are seeking to find grounds for discontent, and where they are not real, will excite such as are imaginary. In this view therefore, I think that an officer should never depart from established rules unless the necessity was most urgent, important and apparent.

Col. Hamilton leaves the office with high reputation in the opinion of those whose judgment deserves to be respected. His successor can have no higher ambition than to execute the office in the same honourable manner which he has done.

## FROM COL. JOHN TRUMBULL.

LONDON, February 16th, 1795.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 8th November came to my hands some time since, but no opportunity has occurred of writing, except the packet, until the present, and as I had nothing particularly interesting to communicate, I have delayed answering till now. The information which you gave of the state of public opinion, of the western insurrection and the decline of the self erected societies, was no less interesting to Mr. Jay than to myself, and we hope that reason, and a disposition to calculate coolly, advantages and disadvantages, will guide their determination of the merits of what has been done here. But I fear that the spirit of party is not extinct, but sleeping only, will be roused to new and vigorous exertions on this occasion. The cursed runaway negroes will serve as the basis of new popular clamours, and although their value was never estimated higher than $400,000, there will be people childish enough to consider this trifle cause sufficient for a war which cannot cost less than £5,000,000 a year, and which in the most favorable event, would leave the proprietors of the people in question, farther from their money than they were in the beginning. Another ground will be the necessity of paying debts, this to a true democrat, that is to say, to a gentleman aristo-democrat, is a most shameful hardship, an insult not to trust to the honor and morals of their good men and true, in matters of this kind. In short, there are so many interested, so many ill intentioned, and so many weak men, that I fear our labors of peace will meet violent opposition, and hardly survive the storm. You ask for a clue to the strange events of the day. I have only seen one side of the question as yet. I shall go on the continent in a few days, and mean to pass through a part of Germany (where one of my plates is engraving) Switzerland and France. When I return perhaps I shall be better able to form a just estimate of events, as well as causes, and will write you.

We understand that Col. Hamilton has gone out of office, and presume, tho' we are not exactly informed, that you succeed him. Though I wish that the former part of this report may not be verified, at least till after the fate of the treaty is decided, yet whenever he does go out, I as much hope the office may go into hands as worthy as those named to us.

Our old friend Barlow, I understand, is at Altona, and means to go out soon, but I wish he may not only settle his affairs, which are his motives of delay, but his brains also, before he goes to America. There is a report of the death of the Empress of Prussia, and of the British troops that were driven from Holland being in a critical situation, closely pursued by Pichegru. I will not vouch for the truth of either. Your friend and servant,

JNO. TRUMBULL.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, March 3d, 1795.

I received your letter of February 16th, and am happy in the expressions of your confidence that I may merit and preserve the public opinion in my favor in my present situation. I can truly say that I feel a diffidence in undertaking the task allotted to me ; but this will not produce any relaxation of exertions. The best services which I can render will be performed, and in any event I shall feel no concern that my character as an honest man will suffer.

The present session of Congress will terminate in good humour. Several important acts have passed, and one appropriating the revenues in trust for the extinction of the public debt. The arrangements which this measure will produce, and its eventual consequences, will be highly important, more so than has yet been perceived. Of course a new topic of discussion has been created. I shall certainly give every possible efficacy to the proposed plan, and if the debt can be diminished, it will be my study to accomplish it.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, March 16th, 1795.

* * * The situation in which you are placed is highly important to the public as well as honourable to yourself; but I have full confidence that in case you enjoy health, which you ought to endeavour to preserve, the duties of it will be honourably discharged and to the good acceptance of the public. At the same time it will be well for you to expect to meet with calumny, which no man who faithfully does his duty has any reason to hope to escape. The man who shall so conduct as to enjoy the approbation of his own conscience, and the respect of the virtuous, the sensible and the good, obtains every thing in life as it respects his character and peace of mind, which he ought to wish for. This satisfaction I trust you will enjoy and finally a happiness which the world can neither give nor take from you.

The third Congress terminated on the 4th of March, 1795. Besides the loan of $2,000,000, authorized in December in anticipation of the revenues of the ensuing year (which has been included in a previous statement) and the authority given by the act of January 8th to reimburse the instalment of foreign debt, and the third instalment of the stock loan out of the proceeds of previous foreign loans, the following new ones were created.

By an act passed February 21, 1795, the Bank of the United States was authorized to loan the $800,000 remaining of the Algerine loan, and revenues were designated for its reimbursement. By an act passed March 3d, making provision for the military and naval establishments and the support of government, the President was authorized to borrow to the extent of the annual appropriations for those objects. The action under these authorizations will appear hereafter.

Other acts relative to the treasury were those extending the time limited for receiving subscriptions to the public debt, and establishing the office of purveyor of public supplies. The principal measure was, however, that of March 3d, "making further provision for the support of public credit and the redemption of the public debt," founded on Mr. Hamilton's report. As enacted, it was by no means so extensive as the plan recommended by him, and owing partly to this inadequacy, partly to events occurring abroad, effected much less towards the immediate completion of its object than had been contemplated. The chief features were as follows.

The commissioners of the sinking fund were authorized to borrow to the amount of $1,000,000 annually, in anticipation of the appropriated revenues.

A loan was directed to be opened at the treasury to the full amount of the foreign debt, for which *domestic* stock was to be issued, bearing one half per cent. higher interest than the original debt, the principal to be reimbursable at will.

The temporary duties on imports were made permanent, and appropriated to the payment of the public debt.

The following additional appropriations were likewise made to the fund constituted by the act of 1792, "making provision for the reduction of the public debt," to which the name of the SINKING FUND was now given:

1st. An amount of the imposts and tonnage duties, the duties on domestic spirits and on stills, sufficient, together with the existing revenues of the fund, to reimburse annually, commencing on the 1st January, 1796, the two per cent. on the capital of the six per cent. stock bearing present interest.

2d. The surplus of the dividends on the bank stock owned by the United States, after deducting the interest on the loan with which it was purchased.

3d. An amount of the above mentioned duties, sufficient with the bank dividends, to repay the remaining annual instalments of the bank loan as they should fall due, and on the first of January 1802, to recommence the reimbursement of the two per cent. on the principal of the deferred stock.

4th. The net proceeds of sales of the public lands in the western territory.

5th. Monies received into the treasury on account of debts due the United States by reason of any matter before the adoption of the constitution.

Lastly. All surpluses of revenue remaining at the end of any calendar year beyond the amount of appropriation charged upon it, and not appropriated during the next session of Congress thereafter.

The proceeds of these, and the sums accruing from former appropriations, were vested in trust in the Commissioners of the sinking fund, and the faith of the United States was pledged that they should so inviolably remain until the whole existing debt should be paid. All reim-

bursements of the *principal* of the debt, both foreign and domestic, and the payment of the interest on the 6 per cent. stock, were thus henceforth to be made under superintendence of the commissioners, and they were empowered, as any instalments of principal became due, to borrow on the credit of the United States sums requisite for their payment, provided that loans so made should be redeemable at pleasure, and not bear over 6 per cent. interest.

The act further prescribed the mode of application of these funds. The last section repealed the limitations contained in the several acts laying internal duties, and extended them to the 1st March, 1801. By other acts, the time for receiving on loan the domestic debt was again extended, and some alterations were made in the revenue laws, pursuant to Mr. Hamilton's recommendations.

Several further acts were passed, relating to the improvement of the revenue and other business connected with the treasury, which do not require particular mention.

The sum of $1,122,569, was appropriated for the expenses arising from the whiskey insurrection; a law was passed establishing a new rule of naturalization, requiring five years residence, and three years previously declared intention, as a condition. The President was authorised to fill vacancies in the departments, ad interim, with the provision that such power should not extend beyond six months. A law was enacted providing for calling out the militia, "to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions," and another fixing the military establishment.

Wolcott's administration was in the outset attended with some unforeseen embarrassments. The funding bill it will be remembered, had authorized the President to borrow to the amount of $12,000,000, to pay the arrears of interest, and the instalments already due upon the

foreign debt, and under this power and the acts providing for subsequent instalments, the loans already mentioned had been made from time to time in Holland. No provision had yet been made for discharging the foreign debt, other than by a resort to these new loans, and hitherto there had been no difficulty in obtaining them. It had however proved extremely inconvenient for the government to remit to Europe, the sums requisite for the payment of interest and commissions, as there was but little specie in the country; as shipments of merchandize were in many respects objectionable, and at times hazardous; and as owing to the deranged state of the exchanges the ordinary modes were productive of loss. To obviate this, the conversion of the foreign into domestic debt, had been authorized by the act just mentioned, in order to make the interest payable in the United States, and to save future commissions on re-loans. Every attempt was made by Wolcott during the spring and summer, to effect the object contemplated by the act, and so far as regarded the French debt, with success. The state of affairs in France, and the advantage of having an active capital in the United States, for the purchase of provisions and stores, induced the government, which was in this case the creditor, to enter into the proposition. The balance of that debt was ascertained and subscribed to the new loan, and stock issued accordingly. These stocks were known as the five and a-half and four and a-half per cents. of 1795, and amounted respectively to $1,848,900, and $176,000. The Spanish debt having been already extinguished, the Dutch now constituted the whole foreign debt. To that country the efforts of the department were accordingly directed.

A more unpropitious aspect of affairs could not have occurred, than now presented itself there. The war in its progress had extended to the States, and a revolution in their government had followed; the European powers, nearly all of whom were debtors of Dutch capitalists, had

failed in their payments; enormous taxes had been imposed on every species of property; all communication with England had been cut off, and a general and unprecedented derangement existed in their finances and exchange. Besides these exterior embarrassments, a cause of failure existed in the act itself. The inducement of additional interest was not considered of sufficient weight to counterbalance the loss by exchange, the difficulty of transfer, and above all the redeemable character of the proposed loan. Under these circumstances the great object of a general conversion was found unattainable; and for the same reason it became impossible punctually to meet the annual instalment of the old loan, which fell due during the summer. Mr. Hamilton had in January, as a preferable species of remittance, purchased of the bank of the United States, the sum of $500,000, in six per cent. stock, which as already mentioned, was sent to the bankers in Amsterdam for sale, in order that the proceeds should be applied to the instalment there. In April, the further sum of $160,000 was purchased, and in like manner remitted by Wolcott. In this operation it was expected that the stock would be sold at par, including interest, or that the instalment would be continued on loan by a new contract. Both calculations however were disappointed. In consequence of the state of things existing there, no re-loans could be made on the proposed terms, and the stock could not be sold except at a ruinous sacrifice. As the cause of delay in discharging the instalment was well known, and as the interest was duly paid, the public credit did not suffer; but the fact showed the improvidence of Congress in restricting the commissioners of the sinking fund, as to the terms of the loan, without providing other resources.

This and other operations of the treasury during the summer, will be found mentioned in Wolcott's report to the President, previous to the session following. One

subject however—that of the temporary loans—requires explanation in the outset. The loans in anticipation of the revenues had been originally recurred to from necessity, because the government found no revenue existing in advance, to meet its current expenses, and they were continued from the impossibility of obtaining at once adequate resources to reimburse past expenditures, and advance for the future. No accumulation would however have occurred, but for the intervention of certain extraordinary contingencies. The Indian war had taken place with its early disasters, and disproportionate expense. The Algerine negotiation had followed, involving a heavy expenditure for the redemption of captives, and purchase of future tranquillity; the whiskey insurrection added its million and a quarter to the demands on the treasury. For all these, monies were to be obtained at once, and as the revenue could not on the instant be extended to meet them, other loans had necessarily been resorted to, and for greater convenience were made payable in instalments. Provision was always made for the interest upon them, and as far as possible for the reimbursement of principal, while the remaining necessary funds it was intended to provide by new revenues. The raising of these, however, the opposition had obstructed; thus it became necessary to renew the instalments of the temporary loans, which it had been expected to pay off, and they in connection with the mere annual anticipations, which however were provided for, had in the beginning of this year accumulated to the amount already mentioned. Even during this session Congress made no provision for the instalment of the foreign debt, or the stock loan, but a renewal; and their provisions for the Algerine and military loans proved entirely insufficient. The consequence was that the temporary debt, by the action of this Congress, was increased to $6,200,000, and by the negligence of the next, the nation was eventually saddled with a large part of the accumu-

lation as a permanent debt, nor was sufficient income provided, until a federal majority at last stepped in to retrieve the finances.

With regard to the Algerine loan, a particular notice is necessary, it having been the subject of violent attack upon Wolcott. It has been more than once stated that the anti-federalists strenuously opposed the creation of a naval force to reduce those pirates to order, preferring the purchase of peace as more economical. In pursuance of this resolve of the majority, the loan of $1,000,000 had been directed at the session preceding this last, to redeem captives and arrest future depredations, but the amount of $200,000 only, which was borrowed at five per cent. of the Bank of New York, could be had. The subject, at the instance of the Secretary of State, was on the 4th of February laid before Congress in a special message, and referred to a committee of five—Messrs. Sedgwick, Madison, Baldwin, Smith, and Giles—the majority being members of the opposition. Wolcott was, by this committee, desired to ascertain in what manner the proposed loan could be obtained. He ascertained that the Bank of the United States, fettered by its previous loans, could advance no money, but offered the loan in six per cent. stock. This was reported to the committee in the specific terms in which the contract was afterwards concluded, and it was expressly, and on full explanation, approved by them that the amount should be thus borrowed and the stock remitted to London for sale. The bill authorizing a loan was reported by them to Congress, and passed without opposition.[a]

The stock was borrowed; the house of Barings was by Wolcott designated to the Secretary of State to negociate sales and remit the proceeds to Gen. Humphreys. Here his responsibility ceased, and the subsequent loss, even if

[a] Vide report of January 28, 1800, "on the condition of the Treasury Department."

not unavoidable, was in no way chargeable to him. Before the arrival of the stock in England, the market price had fallen, and it was necessarily sold at a sacrifice. There was also a further deficiency in the sum which finally reached General Humphreys, which was thus explained by the bankers: "The great defalcation in the nominal amount of dollars arises from the remittance being made in funds which sell at 10 per cent. under par, and the payments being made in foreign money at a rate very much above par. That of Leghorn in particular had advanced 16 or 18 per cent. above what it was not a long while since." A popular outcry was raised at this transaction, which extended finally to the appropriation itself—the anti-federalists forgetting, with their usual facility, that the latter had been made by a Congress in which they had a majority, in pursuance of a policy of their own, and that the sacrifice was in consequence of their own neglect of other provision. The party indignation at the expense of the whiskey insurrection was less extraordinary. It was a bitter pill for some of them to acquiesce in a payment for the suppression of their own work.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## SUMMER OF 1795.

### TO JEDEDIAH MORSE.

PHILADELPHIA, March 4, 1795.

* * * *

I have not shown your letter to Col. Hamilton, as it could serve no good purpose. I have heard him, however, declare that no such opinions were ever advanced by him. The reporter is well known, and the story rests on his personal credit.

I have often endeavoured to account for the errors which so extensively circulate, to the prejudice of public characters and to the great discontent of the community. In many cases they proceed from simple, unmixed malice ; but not unfrequently they originate in the jealousy of dark and metaphysical minds, who, having no frankness and candour of their own, wrest and pervert every thing they hear to the worst possible construction.

We have lived long enough to have witnessed the course of public opinion on many political and religious topics, and in every case you must have observed that zeal and orthodoxy, in a vulgar sense, have depended more on the temperament of the constitution than on moral qualities, or reason, or information. I do not know one man of sense and information who seriously apprehends any danger from monarchical opinions, or from any tendency in the government to produce in any officer or public body a dangerous accumulation of power. Yet there are, and ever will be, a description of men who are tormented with fears that this will happen. In every village, in the most rude state of society, there are monarchy men, aristocrats, and democrats. Your informer's imagination was as much disquieted during the old confederation on this subject, as at the present moment. The disorder exists in his own brain and is incurable.

The following letter, notwithstanding its date, was received only about this time :

## FROM COL. JOHN TRUMBULL.

London, November 20, 1794.

Dear Sir,

I congratulate you on the event of Mr. Jay's negotiations. A treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation, was signed yesterday by Lord Grenville, and one which, I hope, will put an end to all misunderstandings between the two nations, and lay the foundation of future good offices and cordiality. The objects of mutual justice and mutual benefits are, I think, provided for, in a way equally honourable and advantageous, and none but those who feel a reluctance to do justice, have any ground of complaint. I do not, indeed, see what more desirable terms we could have obtained after a successful war; and that which would then have been honourable, must surely be more so when obtained without the waste of life, morals, and property, which even victory brings with her. It is no longer useful to inquire what weight extraneous circumstances may have had in producing this accommodation; nor is it wise to conjecture what may, at any former period, have been the temper of this government towards us; suffice it to know that there now exists a very sincere disposition to be upon good terms with us, which, if fairly met and wisely cultivated by us, will lead on to fortune, fame and greatness. No point exists in this treaty which can excite the justifiable regret of any friend of other connections, since it is expressly stipulated that nothing therein contained shall be construed to invalidate the obligations of any existing treaty, and we only have the opportunity of being upon good terms with two great nations instead of one. I hope you will not learn hereafter that any imprudent warmth of mine has done harm in this business. I have not the vanity to suppose that I have done any other service in this business than another clerk would have done, but I think I have done no evil.

Will you have the goodness to forward immediately the enclosed letters; to remember me to Mrs. Wolcott, and all friends, and to believe me, truly, your friend and servant,

JNO. TRUMBULL.

## FROM RUFUS KING.

New York, 19th March, 1795.

Dear Sir,

As was to have been expected, various rumours are circulated respecting Mr. Jay's return to this country. Those who wish his election as Governor of this State, expect his return early in the spring, certainly before the month of July; on the other hand, those who prefer the election of Mr. Yates assert that Mr. Jay will wait to exchange the ratification of the treaty, and in case it should not be ratified here, that he will remain for the purpose of procuring such alterations as shall be desired. It is said Mr. Blaney has declared that Mr. Jay told him that he should remain in England to exchange the ratifications, and there is reason to believe that Mr. Blaney has made this declaration; but it is so contrary to the letters received from Mr. Jay by his friends here, that it is appre-

hended Capt. Blaney has been misunderstood, or has misconceived Mr. Jay's expressions to him.

The following are extracts from two letters from Mr. Jay to a friend in this place:

"21st Nov., 1794.

"The treaty being signed, and therefore my further stay here not being necessary, I exceedingly regret that I cannot immediately return to you; but the season is too far advanced. I have not health enough for a winter's passage."

"5th December, 1794.

"My former letters will inform you, that to avoid the severity of a winter's passage, I think it advisable to remain until spring. After the 1st of March, I think you may suspend writing to me. I shall endeavor to leave this in April, indeed in one of the first spring vessels that may offer."

As it is important that Mr. Blaney's declaration should not be employed to defeat Mr. Jay's election, I ask the favor of you to see Mr. Blaney, and after showing him these extracts to ascertain from him the fact on this subject.

It is not intended to make any publication on this subject. The information is sought for to supply the friends of Mr. Jay, who upon the authority of his letters have declared his intention to leave England early in the spring. Your answer shall be considered as confidential. With sincere esteem, &c.,

RUFUS KING.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., May 2d, 1795.

There is so much reason to fear the subversion of the commercial and financial systems of Europe at no remote period, that the consequences of a revulsion upon this country, deserve attention and more precaution than will probably be taken on our part.

The Mynheers have probably found by this time that their liberty is not a free gift. As their revolution has been altogether a matter of speculation and envy, so far as the rich people have been concerned in it, I do not perceive that much is to be expected from their efforts to establish a national government. I expect nothing more than a repetition of the same scenes of plunder and requisition which have desolated Belgium. By the last advices, we learn that the French had begun to impose contributions, and that assignats were introducing. The Russian, Swedish, and Imperial powers had forfeited their credit by the non-payment of interest. The Polish loans had been given up as lost; the East India Company had failed; and the province of Holland was considered as bankrupt. I believe, therefore, that not a single power in Europe, except England, can make a campaign except by recurring to plunder and requisitions. This must be the consequence of the destruction of that system of credit of which Holland was the centre.

The English appear to be well united in the prosecution of the war, but a

revolution in government on French principles, or despotism under ancient forms will probably be its consequence. By all I can learn, the French resources are much impaired, and I do not expect that they will act with their usual vigor the ensuing summer, as the nation are in arms and wretched without a government, and without a plan for settling their affairs which can command any degree of confidence at home or abroad. The peace of Europe must however be considered as remote. The equilibrium of society appears to be destroyed, nor will it be restored in my opinion until after many vibrations.

Wherever there exists the pabulum for the fire of equality and fraternity, I expect to see its effects; and in the degree in which countries are commercial and populous they appear to me exposed to desolation. Italy, the West Indies, and South America, are probably much exposed, though from different causes and in different degrees. It is one of the chief sources of satisfaction to me, that my friends are in less danger than any people of the world. We must expect some nonsense even in the northern states, when all the rest of the world is raving mad; but I presume we are not to expect a subversion of ancient principles, at least in the present age. There has been rather too much flattery and adulation in some of our public measures, by which nations are as easily made vain and conceited as individuals. I hope, however, that we shall suffer no permanent injury. If we can escape present dangers, the example of Europe will, I am satisfied, afford us instructive lessons for future conduct.

Congress adjourned on the 3d of March, and on the 7th, the treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation, concluded with Great Britain was received. On the 8th, the Vice-President and a quorum of the Senate were convened, and the treaty, with the documents connected with it, submitted to them.

The original difficulties between the United States and Great Britain arose from the non-execution of the treaty of peace, each nation charging the other with the first infraction. The principal complaints were, on the one hand, the non-delivery of the posts held by the latter within the American lines, and the carrying off of slaves at the close of the war; on the other, the interposition by the states of legal impediments to the recovery of debts contracted before the war. To these, others had been since superadded on the part of both countries. It was obvious that to bring about any real adjustment of present complaints, the stipulations of the treaty of peace must be performed, which on our part would require the pay-

ment of the debts, or at least the removal of all legislative impediments to their collection, and to the debtors this necessity was a disagreeable one. Of these debts, by far the greater part were owed by states south of Pennsylvania, and one-half of the whole amount of claims afterwards exhibited, was against Virginia alone. The 4th article of the treaty of peace, which provided that such impediments should not be placed in the way of their collection, had therefore excited in that state especially, a strong disgust; and relying upon the want of compulsory powers in the confederation, she had passed, from time to time, in defiance of the treaty, laws which effectually prevented its enforcement in that particular; those laws the British government had always assigned as a justification of the non-fulfilment of the stipulations on her part. The amendments proposed by the Virginia convention to the new constitution, so far as they related to the *powers* of the federal government, were chiefly directed to the abridgment of the judicial authority, and one of them pointed directly at the subject of these debts. It was evident that while the jurisdiction over this subject matter was retained by the state courts, the state could control the event of the suits. The amendments were fortunately not adopted; the judiciary power as planned by the convention, except in one respect, remained undiminished; and the dread of its exercise continued to feed the flame of opposition to the federal constitution and to the existing administration.

Mr. Jefferson's negociations with Mr. Hammond had been well calculated to increase the difficulty of adjusting the questions growing out of the treaty of 1783. In discussing the subject of the debts, in particular, he had resorted to a kind of special pleading which by no means tended to produce a conviction of his own sincerity or that of his government, and the result had been accordingly that no settlement was obtained of any of the sub-

jects of dispute. The British government viewing the United States as soon to be added to the number of their enemies, continued their system of depredations and omitted no means of annoyance, even if it fell short of open hostilities. It is not intended to defend the conduct of that power; it was undoubtedly marked by a disregard of the laws of nations, by a contempt of justice, by a violation of the rights of others, which have characterized her policy towards every nation incapable of defence; but it must be admitted that the tone of the diplomatic correspondence and the course of the opposition in America, gave a color to the supposition that ultimate hostilities must follow, and influenced her unjust and unwise policy towards a neutral nation.

It was in this state of things that Washington had instituted an embassy to make one more and final attempt at a peaceful termination of disputes. The bare nomination of an envoy had met with fierce opposition. To the Virginia party the individual selected was himself already obnoxious, because as one of the negociators of the treaty of peace he had admitted the article to them so detestable. It could not be supposed that he would now deny the obligations which he had then recognized, obligations which to them were the great objections to a treaty. A war would, in their opinion, bring about a more satisfactory settlement of the claims. A further proof of their hostile disposition and of its cause, was immediately manifested. On the 5th of May 1794, Mr. Monroe moved in the Senate for leave to bring in a bill to suspend the article, relating to the debts, an act corresponding to the whole course of his party during that session, entirely inconsistent with any amicable intentions and which, had it prevailed, would have effectually defeated the mission, even had it not led to immediate hostilities.[a]

[a] An attempt, made about this time in the Virginia Legislature, to repeal a law exempting real estate from execution for debt, failed by a decided majority.

But there was another and most potent influence at work. The pacific settlement of the differences with England would oppose an effectual check to the designs of France and her diplomatic agents, and emissaries throughout the Union therefore exerted their influence to defeat it. They unfortunately found materials easy to work upon. Besides the interest already spoken of, there was throughout the country a general, deep seated, national hatred of Great Britain, burning every where with an intense, if not a conspicuous flame, for among the native population there was hardly a fire side which the war had not desolated, there was scarcely one of man's estate who had not shared in its hardships as well as its glories. The sight of a blackened roof-tree, the tale of the prison ship, the sugar house, or the county jail, had their recollections as well as the musket which hung over every chimney. And if the memory of these even had slumbered, there were the later outrages on her part, repeated violations of the laws recognized between civilized countries, piratical spoliations upon our commerce, impressments of our seamen under a pretence easily set up when supported by power, the retention of the western posts, underhanded instigation of Indian hostilities—to awaken them. There were refugees of every class from England scattered over the land, men who from their crimes or desperate fortunes had "taken refuge in patriotism," and who burned with an unnatural vindictiveness towards their former country. There were the numerous French and other European emigrants who were devoted to their cause, and besides these there were all the ordinary components of opposition; men and classes who were aggrieved or fancied themselves so by the operation of various measures, or were disappointed in ambitious projects; general malcontents, who easily persuaded themselves or were persuaded that a war would relieve them; western settlers

who wanted the navigation of the Mississippi, and Pennsylvanians who wanted the abolition of the excise laws. Here was a pile of combustibles ready for the torch, and there were not wanting instruments to apply it. In the eyes of the federal party, the dangers of a war in such a conjuncture were infinite and obvious. Abroad, France was making rapid strides to the universal dominion of Europe, involving friend and foe in a common ruin, offering to nations the single alternative of subjugation or conquest. Towards us, her policy was in their view the same, restrained only by the circumstance of distance, and intrigue was here accomplishing that which distance otherwise might have prevented. A war would but add to the difficulties of our position, while it would take away its advantages. In our defenceless state it would expose us to ravage upon land, and would subject our commerce to general destruction instead of partial depredation. It would increase the burdens of our national debt, it would redress none of the grievances of which we complained, and more than all it would lay us open to the deadly fraternization of France.

The mode adopted by Mr. Jay in conducting his negociations had been marked by simplicity and frankness as well as by statesmanship, and had for the most part been successful. In regard to reparation for the captures under orders in council, which formed a principal object of his embassy, a board of commissioners was provided, who upon investigation, should award compensation for American vessels and property taken *under color* of authority, deciding "according to the merits of the several cases and to justice, equity and the laws of nations." No redress by payment or restitution could be however obtained for the negroes carried away, and Mr. Jay was unwilling to risk the treaty upon this point. On the part of the United States the alleged breach of the treaty of peace in the obstruction of the collection of debts was to

be corrected before the evacuation of the posts could be demanded. A mixed commission was provided on this subject also; their authority being extended to captures by the French of British vessels in the waters of the United States. The posts were agreed to be evacuated by the first of June 1796; the boundary lines to be settled by surveys made by commissioners to be appointed for the purpose. The West India trade was admitted only in vessels of seventy tons and under, and upon condition that the goods should be imported into the United States alone; as a security for the fulfilment of the condition, similar articles were not to be exported. As Mr. Jay's instructions precluded him from forming a treaty which did not secure at least a qualified trade with these islands, an article was admitted on these terms, limited however to two years after the expiration of the war. A direct trade was granted to the British East Indies on the payment of the same duties as the English themselves, and a reciprocal commerce agreed upon with the European possessions. Contraband articles were specified. Subsequent articles contained regulations forbidding the arming of privateers of a third power at war with either, in the ports of the other, and forbidding the sale of their prizes; granting to ships of war and privateers of either, liberty to enter and depart with their prizes without examination, and denying an asylum to enemies having prizes in the ports of the neutral. In respect to the last provision it was stipulated not to operate contrary to existing treaties; but the parties agreed that while in amity, neither would in future make any treaty inconsistent with these articles. The treaty, excepting some permanent articles and that relating to the West India trade, was limited to twelve years.

The state of parties when the treaty arrived was in accordance with the wishes of its enemies, and the mere intelligence of its reception, even before its contents were

divulged, produced a furious outbreak against the administration. Had evidence been wanting before, that the objections of the opposition were not to *the* treaty, but to *any* treaty with Great Britain, it was to be found here. While its opponents were busily engaged in shooting in in the dark, the Senators with little less acrimony were discussing its provisions with closed doors, a course which created much dissatisfaction among the journalists and their readers, and was assailed as savouring of monarchy. Democracy however, when ascendant did not alter the practice.

### TO FREDERICK WOLCOTT.

PHILA., May 15th, 1795.

* * * *

The Senate are in Session. How long they will continue so is uncertain. Nothing has transpired respecting the treaty.

I send for your perusal, and for my father's, the late papers. The auspicious change of the French system in Europe will please you, though you will perceive that great and serious dangers yet attend the nations of Europe.

A new French minister has arrived; his character and views are not yet ascertained. There are symptoms, however, of a disposition to conciliate by a reasonable conduct, rather than to influence by means of faction. This is well, and proves that the affairs of France are acquiring consistency.

### TO MRS. WOLCOTT.

PHILA., June 25th, 1795.

The Senate have substantially ratified the treaty, though as one point is suspended, it may be considered as open. I understand they have determined not to countenance a publication, though they have reserved the right of conversing generally about it. Perhaps this will be found equivalent to a publication. At present, however, it may not be correct to *write* what it would be contrary to the rule to *print*. Mr. Ellsworth, however, has so far experienced your faculty of keeping state secrets, that I doubt not he will tell you every thing that you wish to know, and you have my consent to tell others anything that he tells you. This, I think, is a generous indulgence on my part.

I am in perfect health, and Mr. Ellsworth will tell you how well I behave. Indeed, I think I am rather more steady than usual; it is certain that I am not less so. Our friends are as usual. Mrs. Washington enquires after you often, as also the President and the young ladies.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

NEW YORK, June 26, 1795.

Dear Sir,

I have direct information, in confidence, that the Minister of France, by a letter received yesterday, has ordered a *fast sailing vessel* for France to be prepared at this port. No doubt this has connection with the treaty with England. I presume, with the reserve that decorum requires, he is apprised of the contents of that treaty. This ought, at least, to go so far as to satisfy him that there is nothing in it inimical to his country, especially as I suppose it to be adopted. It is well to regard our peace on all sides as far as shall consist with dignity.

Indeed, I am of opinion, on the whole, that all further mystery, at present, is unnecessary, and ought to be waived for the satisfaction of the public mind. I do not think that any scruples of diplomatic decorum are of weight enough to stand in the way. Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., June 27, 1795.

The Senate adjourned yesterday, and I consider myself as at liberty to give you the outlines of our treaty with Great Britain. More particulars will be given soon.

The posts are to be evacuated before next June, and in the meantime the United States may take possession of and occupy any lands not immediately held by the British.

The doubtful boundaries in the north-eastern and north-western quarters of the United States are to be adjusted and settled by commissioners, to be mutually chosen, and according to the spirit and meaning of the late treaty of peace.

The British and American dominions are to be free to both nations for all purposes of *interior* commerce, under such regulations as each government shall prescribe to their respective citizens and subjects.

The demands of American merchants for captures and spoliations, when the laws do not afford relief, are to be adjusted by commissioners, and the sums awarded are to be paid by the British government.

The losses of British subjects, in consequence of *legal impediments* to the execution of the treaty of peace, are to be adjusted by commissioners and paid by the United States.

The treaty is silent in respect to our claims for negroes.

A trade is secured to the British East Indies on the same terms as are or shall be allowed to British subjects, with the limitations that we shall not carry on the coasting trade of India, and that whatever we export from India shall be landed in some part of America.

An article was inserted, which is referred to further negociation, by which we were allowed a trade to the British West Indies, in vessels of 70 tons burthen, on

the same terms in respect to merchandise and tonnage duties as British subjects, on condition that British vessels generally were to be allowed similar privileges in our ports, and on condition that we should not export to any foreign country, sugar, coffee, cocoa, or *cotton*.

That part of the treaty which respects *amity* contains mutual stipulations, that funds and stock shall not be sequestered or taxed even in time of war; that commissions for privateering, or engagements for entering into a foreign service, shall not be permitted; that the prizes of other nations shall not be sold in our ports, &c., &c.

The West India article is an unlucky one, as it contains a prohibition against the exportation of cotton, which is an increasing production of our own country. It has, however, been so recently introduced that the effect of the article was probably overlooked by both of the negotiators. It certainly was by Mr. Jay. Even in respect to the other articles, the privilege which we now enjoy (and which we shall probably always enjoy when we are at peace and Europe is engaged in war) of exporting West India merchandize to foreign countries, is more valuable than the limited trade which the British have offered. On these grounds the article is not admitted by the United States. We certainly cannot *claim* an admission into the British islands, and if they will not consent to admit us without requiring more than an equivalent, the object must be renounced. Popular opinion, both here and in England, has, in my judgment, much overrated the advantages and disadvantages of the intercourse which we solicit. It would not ruin the marine of England, as the British apprehend would be the case if we were to be gratified, and if we are refused, we shall not fail to enjoy as much commerce as is for the true interests of our country. The immense interest in navigation which we now possess, is defenceless. Any considerable increase would compel us to become a maritime power, the conquences of which it is easy to foresee.

I am satisfied with what has been done. The interior and frontiers of our country are secured; the questions of spoliations and debts are as well arranged as the subjects would admit. How the balance of receipts and expenditures will stand, is uncertain; be the case as it may, we shall, I hope, learn that there are two sides to a bargain, and that national engagements cannot be violated with impunity, except by a powerful nation. The policy of Virginia is as foolish as it is wicked—at the same time that they refuse to be honest, they endeavour to depress and restrain the public energies, which wise rogues would have been willing to substitute for integrity.

The Senate have determined not to publish the treaty. There will, however, be no impropriety in mentioning or showing what I have written respecting it.

## FROM DR. LEMUEL HOPKINS.

HARTFORD, June 28, 1795.

Dear Sir,

I do not study much the general state of politics, yet I have a notion that there are at all times certain portions of this our globe from whence useful les-

sons of this sort arise. Such at present are France and the United States, or rather New England; for the southern states I regard as a chaos of animated atoms. From the former we are to learn whether Liberty, and her younger sister, Equality, can be taken and quietly possessed by the rude onset of an ignorant mass, impelled on by visionary theorists and blood-stained leaders; from the latter, whether an uncommon degree of knowledge among a people, attended with every other advantage can be perpetuated. If it can, good government will be a thing of course. I hope you will not meet with such embarrassments in office as your predecessor has done; that in case, however, you should, you will retire to private life after receiving a like share of *calumny* and *praise*.

I was very glad lately to hear from our friend Barlow's brother, that Joel got at Hamburgh, and carried with him to Paris £2,000 sterling of his own money. But he is not in America, nor yourself in Hartford. Goodrich is going to Congress, and Trumbull will I fear quit the "visible eternal sphere." What, then, O Hartford, hast thou for me! Pleasant, indeed, shalt thou remain, but chiefly for the joys that are past. Yours sincerely and affectionately,

L. HOPKINS.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, June 29th, 1795.

I enclose you a paper which contains the substance of the treaty. It is judged not to be perfectly consistent with decorum and the rules prescribed by custom, to publish a treaty while pending, as this must be yet considered, the ratification being merely conditional. The curiosity of the public and the impossibility of keeping absolute secrecy has induced a compromise, that the treaty may be communicated informally to the public.

It will be seen that the intercourse which we desire with the British West Indies cannot be granted by England without much scruple; even a limited trade, considering our vicinity and the comparative cheapness of our navigation, would perhaps extensively affect the colonial system which Britain considers as the foundation of her maritime power. In the proposed treaty the compensation required, is, however, perhaps more than we can afford to grant in times when we are at peace and Europe at war, which, from past experience and from our pacific policy, may be calculated at one-third of any general period including both war and peace. The article which respects the intercourse with the West Indians is to be referred to further negociations. If we cannot amicably agree, the trade to the West Indies must rest on its present footing, as we have no pretence to claim a trade with a foreign country contrary to its interest and policy. The other articles of the treaty are founded on obvious considerations, and will, I hope, be satisfactory. The greatest embarrassment which we feel at present arises from our defenceless situation; with a commerce spread over every ocean, and with resources which render intercourse with us desirable by all nations, we feel, and shall continue to feel the impressions of foreign rivalry, without being capable of that fixed and uniform policy which would result from firm and com-

bined arrangements in our interior country. There are, however, no public convictions to be produced by reasonings *a priori* on subjects of this nature. Experience is the only teacher of nations.

Our information from Europe indicates the greatest distresses from scarcity, especially on the continent; something approaching to a famine is felt from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. In France the want of bread is extreme, and the public resources exhausting rapidly if not exhausted. In Holland the discipline of the French armies has been perfect, and this has been the only security against the most tremendous convulsions. The Dutch are in my opinion a ruined people. What is to be the destiny of France is uncertain, the guillotine has produced such sensations that even the rancour of party has been restrained by horror at the excesses which have been committed. There is, however, no true moderation in the convention; no faculty for deliberation; no object to which the attention of the nation is directed. From the cool persevering policy of the armies, whose valour, address and discipline, at present without example, something may be expected, especially as it is known that the armies include most of the young men of family and education, and appear to have discovered but little emotion with respect to the interior. To England, France will probably be found a most dreadful enemy, as the whole nation appears to be animated by the most vindictive resentment. Perhaps mutual distresses will compel a temporary compromise between the two nations; but as France perceives herself to be ruined in the midst of her victories, and as she believes, by the perfidy of England, I imagine that nothing less than the subversion of the British government will finally satisfy the implacable passions which the present war has engendered. It is clear that the European system of government has received a wound, and I cannot see how a commercial nation like Britain can fail of being deeply injured by it.

On the 24th of June, by a vote of exactly two-thirds, the Senate advised the ratification, "on condition that there be added to the said treaty, an article, whereby it shall be agreed to suspend the operation of so much of the 12th article, as respects the trade which his said majesty thereby consents, may be carried on between the United States and the islands in the West Indies, in the manner and on the terms and conditions therein specified." "And the Senate recommend to the President, to proceed without delay to further friendly negociations with his Majesty, on the subject of the said trade, and of the terms and conditions in question."

The President, as is well known, was not entirely satisfied with the treaty, but he had determined, previous to

submitting it to the Senate, to ratify it if advised by them.[a] Their qualified approval created several new questions which it was necessary to determine before the further negociations recommended by that body could be entered upon. Mr. Randolph having submitted to him his notes upon these points, the following circular was on the 29th addressed to the members of the cabinet.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

June 29th, 1795.

Sir,

I enclose to you a copy of the resolution of the Senate, advising that the late treaty with Great Britain be ratified.

Upon this resolution two questions arise. 1st. Is, or is not that resolution intended to be the final act of the Senate, or do they expect that the new article which is proposed, shall be submitted to them before the treaty takes effect?

2d. Does or does not the constitution permit the President to ratify the treaty, without submitting the new article, after it shall be agreed to by the British king, to the Senate, for their further advice and consent?

I wish you to consider this subject as soon as possible, and transmit to me your opinion in writing, that I may without delay take some definite step upon the treaty.

GO: WASHINGTON.

To these questions Wolcott replied as follows:

TO THE PRESIDENT.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, June 30th, 1795.

The Secretary of the Treasury, in obedience to the requisition of the President of the United States, respectfully submits his opinion upon the questions arising from the resolutions passed the Senate, on the 24th of the present month, respecting the treaty made with Great Britain.

To the first, That the resolution of the Senate, is a final act of that body, by which they have expressed in the terms of the constitution, their approbation of every article in the said proposed treaty, excepting a part of the twelfth article to which the Senate have not assented; that in case a form of ratification shall be adopted by the President, and be accepted by his Britannic Majesty, reciting an article suspending the operation of that part of the 12th article to which the

[a] Vide letter to E. Randolph, July 22d, 1795. XI. 35. To the same, Oct. 21st, ibid, Spark's Writings of Washington, p. 85.

Senate have not assented ; that the said resolution will be fully satisfied, and the proposed treaty will become valid and obligatory upon the contracting parties, without the further concurrence of the Senate.

To the second—that the powers of commencing negociations with foreign nations, and of propounding or receiving propositions, which are intended to be introduced into treaties with the United States, are by the constitution exclusively vested in the President ; that in making treaties, the powers of the Senate are merely deliberative, and that their advice and consent can be expressed only upon such propositions as are submitted to their consideration.

It is conceived however that the Senate are not confined to a general affirmative, or negative decision, on a proposed treaty embracing distinct propositions; but that they may regularly limit their concurrence by such exceptions as they judge proper.

In deciding upon a proposed treaty which has been submitted to the consideration of the Senate, the President is however to regard the entire act as modified by any exceptions, and may approve or reject the same, as he shall judge proper.

But in case the President shall see fit to approve of a proposed treaty with the exceptions of the Senate, he may accordingly ratify the same without submitting for their further advice and consent, such rescinding clauses or articles, as it may be necessary to introduce into the treaty, for the mere purpose of giving effect to the concurrent decisions of the President and Senate.

While these interlocutory questions were still under consideration, intelligence arrived that the British government had renewed the provision order of June 1793. A new state of affairs was thus presented, and it became a serious question, whether during the existence of these orders the treaty should be ratified at all. The Secretary of State was against ratification ; the other members of the cabinet proposed that the ratification should be sent, accompanied with a protest against the order ; another project also suggested was, that the ratification should be made, but not exchanged till the order was revoked. On these propositions Washington publicly expressed no opinion, but reserving the announcement of his decision until his return from Mt. Vernon, whither business called him, he directed the Secretary of State to prepare instructions and a remonstrance, which should be submitted to the cabinet and forwarded to him. This however Mr. Randolph delayed, and a short time after the President's departure,

a circumstance, (which will be hereafter mentioned) occurred, which added a new feature to this business.

During the time that the treaty was under discussion in the Senate, Mr. Adet, appointed by the French government to succeed Fauchet, arrived. The latter part of Mr. Fauchet's official existence, it may be noticed, had been marked by equal arrogance, though with somewhat more prudence in its expression, than that of his predecessor. The new minister was destined to show that the insolence of both could be improved upon.[a] After the decision by the Senate, a copy of the treaty was communicated to Mr. Adet. He stated in writing to the Secretary of State, some objections founded on supposed infringements of the treaty with France. To these Mr. Randolph replied, as he supposed satisfactorily. The anxiety with which this paper was looked for by the people, had induced the President to authorize the informal publication of its contents, but before this was done the seal of secrecy imposed by a resolution of the Senate, as well as by respect to the Executive, was violated by Mr. Stephens T. Mason, a senator from Virginia, who transmitted an entire copy to the Aurora, on the 29th of June. If the mere annunciation of a treaty with England had produced such exasperation in the Jacobin party, the knowledge of its contents was not calculated to allay it. Its terms when made known, added to the strength of the opposition, as they offered something definite to attack. It contained many advantageous provisions, yet it did not secure all that was to be desired. It left open several points that were important to have settled, points which England refused to concede, and which, it is worth remarking, the late war with that power, undertaken for the very purpose of gaining, left where Jay's treaty left them. It moreover was not con-

[a] Mr. Hammond, the British minister, about this time returned home, and Mr. Bond remained as Chargé d'Affaires, until the arrival of Mr. Robert Liston who was shortly after appointed his successor.

fined to the redress of grievances, which in the opinion of the opposition should have been its only object, if any, but extended to commerce and navigation, and terms of amity with a court, with whom, as republicans, we should have no friendship. Finally, the treaty provided a means of collecting the unfortunate debts. It cannot be denied, that in many things it disappointed its friends, nor wondered at that it should enrage those who had previously determined to disapprove of it. Torrents of vituperation were therefore poured forth ; Catos and other great names of ancient days again appeared upon earth, lamenting the degeneracy of their country, and showing by statistical calculations the amount of sacrifices and degradation it sustained ; inflamed patriots addressed inflammable crowds in every section of the country ; Boston and the other cities passed condemnatory resolutions, which were duly heaped upon the cabinet table. The opposition however did not stop at words. Many disgraceful scenes were enacted in the principal cities during the excitement of the question ; mobs threatened violence to its supporters ; Mr. Jay was burnt in effigy ; the British minister was insulted. In New York, Mr. Hamilton was stoned at a public meeting—members of the opposite party, high in station and influence, standing by without interfering.

It was fortunate for the country at this crisis that to a firmness which nothing could shake, to patriotism which never weighed popularity in the scale of duty, and to discernment which placed in its true light the character of our political relations, the President united the strongest hold upon the confidence and affections of the people at large, which any man perhaps ever justly gained ; for without it, his judgment in the excited state of the public mind would not have been respected, and his firmness would but have involved himself and his policy in ruin. We cannot look back upon the history of that period and

upon the reckless conduct of the leaders of opposition, without participating in the anxiety of wise and virtuous men in the federal ranks, for the stability of our institutions and their fears of the trustworthiness of the people. They had not, as we have had, the experience of those reactions, those returns of popular sanity which assure us that there is a national, as well as an individual virtue, that sooner or later will correct the errors of the past.

It was natural enough that the mass should have been ignorant of the true character of the contest which raged in Europe, and should have kindled with the idea so carefully promulged, that France was advocating their own great cause; equally so that gratitude to their ancient allies should have increased the interest which a people always feel, in the advancement of human right. When we add to these causes of sympathy their just and natural enmity to the great opponent of France; the fact that the aggressions of the latter nation upon our commerce, and the audacious conduct of her ministers were glossed over, while the policy and motives of our own government were wholly and wickedly misrepresented; when we remember the difficulty of counteracting false impressions in the teeth of the means taken to disseminate them; we can no longer wonder that our foreign relations were not generally seen in their true light. The people were indeed misled from high impulses, but what shall be said of those who deceived them. The leaders of the opposition possessed every information, they had known the character of the revolution in all its phases, they had seen the rottenness of its principles, understood the designs of the French government, the machinations employed to embroil this country in the war, the audacious insolence of Genet, the studied impertinence of his successor, the authorized system of piracy by which their marine was subsisted. There can be no explanation of their conduct but a determination to gain power at the

expense of national honor, by means of foreign influence acting on domestic dissensions.

## TO MRS. WOLCOTT.

PHILADELPHIA, July 1st, 1795.

We have seen but little of Mr. Adet. He appears to be a mild tempered and well educated man and no Jacobin. He speaks no English. I imagine he will not be violent or troublesome, though there is reason to think that he will promote what he deems the interest of his country with much sagacity. Dupont, who, you know, was here two years since, is the Secretary to the Legation. Both he and the Minister have handsome wives, and this is a good sign.

The President has appointed a Mr. Davis of Plymouth,[a] Comptroller, to whom I have written to come on and help us. I hope when he arrives to have some leisure.

PHILADELPHIA, July 8th, 1795.

I have been so busy that I have not had time to write you since the first instant. I am, however, well. Last Saturday was our holiday, when, as usual, we all put on our best clothes and paid visits of congratulation. The weather was fine, and everybody happy except a few rascals who projected a riot. The sense of the citizens, however, preserved perfect order until about twelve o'clock at night, when some fellows in the Northern Liberties burned a man of straw of their own making as an insult to Mr. Jay, and to show their disapprobation of the treaty. A good story is fabricated in Oswald's paper, which represents the city as very gloomy on the 4th of July, and that the effigy was paraded through the city; but this is a lie, told for the purpose of deceiving people at a distance.

We have just received late news from Europe. The prospect of peace appears to have vanished; indeed it is probable that the war will become more general by involving all the northern powers in the contest. A scarcity approaching to a famine is felt everywhere in Europe; there is great danger of a real famine in France; the distress of the aged, infirm, and unprotected in Paris is extreme, and enough to freeze the blood with horror, yet though there have been some disturbances they have not been destructive. It is said that the people have become generally grave and melancholy, and as they know that riots would only increase their misery they submit to misfortune with the most heroic firmness. I have good reason to believe that Mr. M.'s family were, about the middle of May, at an allowance of about two ounces of bread per diem to each person; flesh and vegetables were more plenty. If such is the situation of a family every way favoured, what must be the distress of the immense numbers who are defenceless, or obnoxious to popular resentment in such a city as Paris!

[a] The late Hon. John Davis, U. S. District Judge for Massachusetts.

## FROM FISHER AMES.

Dedham, July 9, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

I am sorry to perceive that Boston is in a very inflammatory state. I was there two days ago, and I learnt that the Jacobins have been successful in prejudicing the multitude against the treaty. What is more to be lamented, almost all the merchants and steady men are said to feel the prevailing fever or to want courage to resist it. A town-meeting is expected, and if it should be convened, I expect its proceedings will be marked with folly and violence. I could neither repress my indignation, nor disguise my contempt for the blindness and gullibility of the rich men who so readily lend their strength to the party which is thirsting for the contents of their iron chests. They tremble for liberty if it is proposed to give our form of government intrinsic strength, and if it is made to rest on such men for props they slip away from their burden. It is to be denied the extrinsic support which the interests of the half-witted, and, in this instance, outwitted men of property were expected to give, and that steadily. So many feel dislike of the treaty, and so few dare oppose the popular feeling, that I apprehend not only mischievous proceedings in town-meeting, but also that the contagion will spread, especially southward. I am happy to find the town-meeting is thus far delayed, as every day abates the heat of some and emboldens the spirits of others. I am not surprised, although I am concerned to see the profound ignorance of the subject among those who believe and assert their right to rejudge the doings of Mr. Jay and the Senate. It makes them peculiarly susceptible of irritation and no less indocile to fact and argument. The Jacobins, in fact, have the possession of the ground, and they will not fail to fortify themselves in their acquisition. The country is yet perfectly calm, but pains will be taken to inflame it. My hope is, that early attention will be paid to the merchants of New York and Philadelphia. Right impressions made in those places, like a double brick wall, might stop the flame of the Boston resolves, if any should be passed. It is also important that temperate and masterly vindications of the treaty should appear in the gazettes. Better, if in a pamphlet.

I am, perhaps, more provoked and discouraged than I should be on the occasion. It seemed as if the shining and prosperous period of our government would be safe and popular. But our federal ship is near foundering in a mill-pond. The pillars of the temple of liberty need holding up by hand when the storm does not blow. I am more and more confirmed in my croakings about our affairs. The prejudices and passions of the multitude are scarcely more deadly to public order than the theories of our philosophers. Our nation, I fear, must be taught as others have been, by danger and suffering; teaching by book makes little impression. We must learn by great events, by having the scars of great wounds to point to, the recollection of which will secure for an age or two all the feelings of the multitude, and most of the reason of our politicians, on the side of order and good government. To resume the subject I set out with, what can augur worse for our affairs than to see men of wealth, and at least of reputed sense, openly acting against the doings of the Executive. That branch is weak

in its constitution. If the bullying of parties should make it cowardly also, it will be nothing, it will be worse than nothing, for it will become the tool of party. It is some relief to me to give vent to my vexation by writing this letter. If that, or any other plea would excuse its prolixity, it will be a relief when I need such help, for you have head and hands too full to read my dismal forebodings, and I declare beforehand, I disclaim all pretensions to any reply. With perfect esteem, I am yours sincerely,

FISHER AMES.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 10th, 1795.

I have received your several letters dated June 22d, 26th, 30th and the 2d. current.

The new publication of the treaties was a measure not consistent with my first impressions and expectations. It was not, however, left by the Senate in the manner you suppose ; this resolution indeed evinces the contrary, and the executive must, in addition to whatever difficulties would have attended a publication if the Senate had been silent respecting the publication, have appeared to oppose their sense by an official disclosure. The French minister has been informed of the contents seasonably. No extraordinary sensibility has been discovered by him respecting the treaty. The Spaniards are however, feverish with respect to the Mississippi article. Between ourselves I have reason to believe that a cession of Louisiana and the Floridas will be required by France as the price of peace, and I believe they will obtain them. The Spaniards must comply and the French will offer a guarantee of the remaining Spanish American dominions. The effect of this measure on our affairs it is easy to foresee.

By late letters from France there is reason to fear that the most destructive commotions will be produced by the scarcity or rather famine in that country. Mr. M's. family of fourteen persons were allowed two pounds of bread per diem. Flour costs forty dollars per barrel in specie. The finances were in a state of ruin as appears from facts though the conclusion is not admitted. The canton of Berne has prohibited the exportation of provisions from a fear of famine among themselves. I am inclined to believe that our friends the Dutch, are irretrievably ruined. A commissioner is known to have gone from Paris to Amsterdam for money, &c., &c.

I have every reason, short of official information, to believe that the stock purchased has arrived. This resource, with the liberty of postponing the instalment, the chance of negociating bills on this country, and an arrangement which I have made by bills on Hamburg and Paris, in the alternative of a failure at either place, gives every chance for supporting our credit at this crisis, which the nature of things will admit. All money negociations except with England, are and must be hazardous to a certain degree. There is indeed, a French link in the chain upon which reliance must be had.

The anticipations which you intimate in the case of Mr. F——, I have felt

with much anxiety. It would astonish you to know how far the capital of this country has been placed in the power of France by speculations to that country and the excessive use of credit during the last season. If we have a good crop, and the ardour of speculation can be checked so as to allow a loss which I know to be inevitable to fall gradually upon us, the merchants will struggle through; but if we proceed in our present course until a sudden revulsion takes place, the consequences may be serious. As yet the revenue comes in as usual, but further anticipations will in the present state of things be attended with difficulty. *

Various opinions obtain respecting the treaty; but I think people here are more temperate than in some other places, especially at Baltimore and at the southward. There is much prejudice which will be dispelled and I think that the country cannot be much excited.

## TO JEDEDIAH MORSE.

PHILADELPHIA, July 16th, 1795.

The treaty is the chief topic of conversation with politicians. In some places the public opinion is uncandid and intemperate; here I am happy to find that just opinions are prevailing, though not in such a degree as I could wish. I find that more was expected than was reasonable or than could be obtained. We have supposed Britain humble and disposed to make concessions. She supposes herself the arbitress of the ocean and possessing good prospects of being able to influence the commerce of the world. In making bargains she therefore continues to demand valuable considerations for whatever she grants. What our merchants want is a free trade to all parts of the world, but when we ask for commercial privileges in the British dominions, the question occurs, "what do you propose to give in exchange?" The truth is, Britian is proud and powerful on that element where she is our rival. We are at present defenceless, with no inconsiderable portion of pride on our part, for which however, we ought not to be blamed. It is easy to see the difficulty of affording satisfaction to parties so circumstanced, and yet a treaty must embrace the interests and consent of both or perpetual collision and strife must be expected. The treaty is in my opinion valuable, as it proposes an adjustment of old disputes without contention, and as it affords a new security for the enjoyment of privileges which before were had at the pleasure of either party. In some respects it removes the causes from which variance and war were most to be feared.

The present is a momentous period to Europe and perhaps to us. The last advices left it uncertain whether the war would languish through the present season and end the next winter, or whether its flames would spread more extensively. There is color for the belief that Russia, Austria and England, may be opposed to Sweden, Prussia, Denmark, Holland, France, Spain and perhaps the Irish. In this case the condition of the human race will be deplorable; nothing but desolation and famine can be expected, and a most extreme issue to the contest.

The present war has, in every respect been more terrible than any which has

been waged in Europe for the last twelve centuries. The most alarming destruction of useful animals, and all the necessaries of life have marked its progress. In France the people are wasting with famine, and I expect to hear that the same is true in Holland; in every country from the Baltic to the Mediterranean the scarcity and distress is unprecedented in modern times, and yet all parties expect relief from what must inevitably increase their calamities. It is strange that the contrast between our situation and that of Europe should not be more impressive on this country than is the case; that we should not all see and acknowledge the truth. Is it a law of nature that man cannot benefit by the experience of others?

## FROM WILLIAM VANS MURRAY.

CAMBRIDGE, E. S., 19th July, 1795.

Dear Sir,

You were so obliging as to express something like a wish that I should drop you a line, and as you must naturally wish to know how we feel about the treaty here, I seize the present moment to ask you how you do, and to say that from all I can learn or hear respecting this act, it meets with the concurrence of all men of reflection. Not much indeed is said upon the subject; there is so much prosperity and such high prices for wheat &c., that public objects, unless immediately relative to individual concerns, rarely attract attention. The rectitude of the people here and their confidence in the rectitude and wisdom of the Executive and the Senate bade them justly to conclude that all is for the best.

The 12th article I see is suspended. So decisive and unanimous a rejection leaves but little ground to defend its policy. Nor can I see the whole of Mr. Jay's policy in the sacrifice of the carrying trade under it. However I have attempted to find some rationale upon which he grounded this article. What such a man does in a wide sphere of contract, must be supported by some plausible, if not solid hypothesis. It has struck me that he thought if we were let, say for three years, into a full competition with Ireland and their infant, Upper Canada, we should completely possess ourselves of the West India trade and form inflexible habits of dependence upon our supplies, which at the end of the term might lead to better conditions. That in the meantime our consumers here would obtain West India articles on more moderate terms, and the remitters who now remit 50,000,000 of foreign sugars &c., find remittances in the home articles of export which would unite the carrying trade and export of our own raw materials together. That the reverse of this presumes a greater extent of mere carrying than is in proportion to the other branches of industry.

In fact, considering the claims of the United States, the counter claims, right or wrong, of Great Britain, the indisposition of this country to war on these contested points; the situation of both countries, the state at present of the commercial balance in Europe, and what we have obtained and avoided, it appears as good as we should probably have obtained after a seven years war. France in '61 and '62 terminated her war with Great Britain as to her "reclaim of prizes taken from merchants before the declaration of war," upon worse terms,

as the parties spoiled were sent entirely into the courts of Great Britain for redress, nor did France in her preliminary overtures ask for more on that head. Our tonnage however, a great item, is on a worse footing than it was, and indeed it was obvious to those who considered Mr. Madison's propositions that whenever a reversion by treaty took place of the footing of our trade with Great Britain and we were placed on the basis of reciprocity we must feel an abatement of our advantages. I am with great respect, &c.

W. V. MURRAY.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, July 20th, 1795.

Sir,

* * * The important articles of the treaty relative to the interior of the U. States, I believe are well established, viz: respecting the evacuation of the western posts, damages for impeding the collection of debts, injuries done to our commerce, ascertaining our northern points, intercourse with Canada—inhibiting confiscation, etc., and likewise respecting British subjects holding real property. * * * As to the British carrying off the negroes, they had good right to do so. They had been previously manumitted by a power competent to effect it, and could not therefore be considered as property, and this without recurring to the old ideas of universal equality. Congress during the war invited the European soldiers to desert the British service, and held out to them an inducement for the purpose; if this had taken effect, and had the United States delivered up the deserters by treaty, it would have been infamous. I always wondered that Mr. Jefferson should believe that the former treaty had any relation to the negroes. Had the British carried off 20,000, instead of 2000, it would have been well for America. To admit ships of war owned by a nation at war with one with whom we have commercial intercourse, to continue ad libitum in our ports, may embarrass commerce, but this I suppose is allowed to the French, and perhaps therefore ought to be admitted.

I can claim but little knowledge of commerce, but to impose any restraint upon ourselves, as to the manner in which we will carry on our trade with nations whom the treaty does not immediately respect, as the twelfth article does, I should conceive is improper, and ought not to be admitted. How far very specific commercial treaties may be for the interest, or security of America to adopt, I believe is very questionable. It may be so in Europe; a country divided into a great number of distinct commercial jurisdictions, but a great variety of stipulated objects afford many reasons for despots, on account of their real or pretended violation. To establish amity with nations and commerce, consistent with their own national regulations, is perhaps all that is necessary for America, in her remote situation, to exempt herself from embarrassments in her young, inexperienced, and very growing condition, and while Europe is and will be rapidly varying their national condition and character.

The diplomatic system of Europe, has never had but the most feeble effect when opposed to the views of interest or ambition. The nation which depends

upon treaty for its security, leans upon a reed. An article which is to be carried into immediate execution, it may be expected will be performed ; there is such a thing as individual honesty, but there is no national character. The truth of this observation has been exemplified in the character of the Executive, and the evident disposition of the people of the United States. Great Britain by entering into the late treaty, has recognised our national character, which she never intended to do. She hoped events would give her an opportunity to give America a deadly wound. Their administration is rascally, though the nation possesses much commercial honour ; that is they understand their own interests.

The divisions in the Senate were such as were to be expected. The dissentients are very glad the treaty is so far agreed to, and in the manner it has been done, with a rub and a go, as the farmers say. Rather than not to have had it pass, they would have directed Robinson, or some others, to have made out the necessary compliment. The importance of these men depends upon an immutable opposition. Unfortunately for them, the people of the United States are more intelligent and less vicious than the people of Paris.

I have heard but little said about the treaty by our people. There are some who will believe that we ought to make a treaty just as it shall best suit ourselves ; but there will be no difficulty in Connecticut. Our people are calm and hard at work. My observations on the subject, I should not think of making to any one but yourself, and am upon the whole well satisfied, that the affair stands as it does. Many very important objects are obtained by it. I believe the principal caution which ought to be observed is, not to extend treaties further than what is dictated by necessity, or other than such as are founded upon the broad basis of amity only, and to depend upon national interests to effect the rest. * *

Yours, etc., O. WOLCOTT.

## FROM COL. JOHN TRUMBULL.

London, July 24th, 1795.

Dear Sir,

On my return from France, which was only a few days since, I had the pleasure to meet here our friend Cabot, and your very acceptable letter of the 3d of June. We are now expecting every hour the arrival of some one to tell us what is the fate of Mr. Jay's labours. Few doubts would be entertained of the event but for the late order of this government for the bringing in of neutral ships bound to France with provisions. This measure has given great offence to our people here and on the continent ; and those who wish for a good understanding between the two countries dread its operation on your minds, especially when combined with the very improper conduct of Admiral Murray and your Bermuda neighbours. I not only hope, but trust, that the impression will not be so strong as to produce any thing like a rupture, but I sincerely fear that it will prevent that degree of cordiality which was to have been hoped for. The promises and assurances of those in power here are, that all possible dispatch shall be used in the settlement of claims in these cases, and the utmost liberality in payments. But a court of Admiralty is in all countries and cases tedious, and

the forcible arrangement of plans of business offensive; so that with all that can be done, affronts of a deep and lasting nature must in many cases be expected.

You request me to tell you what I have seen. It is not easy, my dear sir, to describe scenes so immense, so various, and so fluctuating. If therefore I give you two or three prominent features of the vast whole, you must be satisfied. The state of cultivation is perhaps one of the most interesting points at the present moment. I have crossed the country from Havre de Grace to Basle through Paris by one road, and returned by another, and in all the distance I see nothing that marks a neglect of agriculture, or a want of hands to labour; on the contrary, the earth is covered with all the usual variety of crops, all promising abundance, if the approach of harvest be warm. Up to the time that I left the country, we had too much rain and cold, which have extended also to this country. Another circumstance struck me forcibly; I mean the very few beggars I met with; formerly whenever a carriage stopped to change horses it was surrounded by half a dozen and often by a whole one, of miserable objects who assailed you in the name of God, and whose appearance bore but too forcible a testimony to the justice of their fervent applications. I have now passed many, very many post houses without meeting a single mendicant. This and some other observations convince me that the condition of the lowest classes of society is improved, perhaps as much as that of the rich is declined; so that with all the horrid scenes which have passed, and all the accumulation of wretchedness which has overwhelmed the upper orders of society, I am disposed to believe that the sum of human happiness has rather increased than diminished. This to be sure is no apology for those who have drenched the cities in blood, and we can only regard them as we would a pestilence, as horrid instruments in the hand of Providence to scourge, and ultimately to purify the corruption of men. Again, I have seen the city of Paris exhibit an example of patient fortitude which I did not expect from such a mass of ignorant and profligate people. I have seen them week after week receive the miserable pittance of *two ounces* of bad bread to a person a day; and support this privation with fewer instances of riot, impatience or murmur than you would have expected from a race of philosophers.

From the probable plenty of provisions, from the fortitude which I have seen the people display when under the pressure of real want, and from the melioration which has certainly taken place in the condition of the mass of inhabitants, I infer that the nation at large is well disposed and does possess both the powers and the will to support the general principle of the revolution; that is, a right to choose a form of government for themselves. And although the constitution, of which I sent you a copy the other day, will not come up to our ideas of a good one, yet I believe it will soon be brought to a trial, be submitted to by the people, and order and tranquillity be restored. A necessity will probably soon recur, as it did with us, of changing and improving the machine, but I hope that will be effected by them as it was by us without inducing new convulsions. The wretchedness which has been the consequence of an eternal succession of factions (and which is lamented there as much as it is by the rest of mankind) has very much eradicated those wild and extravagant ideas of liberty which for a time prevailed, while the pressure of external war, kept up by royal and absolute government,

nurses their abhorrence of the ancient system. I trust they will ere long find that just medium of national freedom which can alone produce and preserve human happiness.

An attempt is now making on the western coast by a body of emigrants in conjunction with the Chouans &c., supported by the British fleet; but it appears to me that the attempt is as feeble as the dream of an infant. Instead of being joined by vast bodies of friends, they have already been several times repressed by the few troops who were in the country, and we are informed that more than an hundred thousand of the troops of the last campaign are in full march from the eastern and northern frontier where a sort of armistice seems to have taken place. Should this effort, as I believe it will, end in complete defeat, I shall hope for a return of peace next winter. France, the victorious, is fatigued and disposed to peace and moderation, and I see no hope left for her exhausted enemies, but in her own dissolution, which I do not imagine will operate in their favour.

We, I hope, shall continue secure in our distance and our prudence, to be spectators only of the devastation occasioned by this great political tempest, and in our prosperity and moderation, give to the world an example of the genuine fruits of national liberty and a government of laws. Yours truly,

JNO. TRUMBULL.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

PHILADELPHIA, July 26th, 1795.

I went to the State House Yard last Saturday for the purpose of observing the proceedings. There were not, in my opinion, fifteen hundred persons present, and one half of this number took no part in what was done. The persons who voted were of the ignorant and violent class of the community. Doctor Shippen was chairman, and Dallas, Pettit, Swanwick, Muhlenburgh, McClenachan, Barker and Judge McKean, ostensible leaders, who were mounted on a stage. The latter was introduced late in the meeting, by Dallas and Pettit. A memorial was read twice, and passed as the sense of the meeting, without opposition or debate. Hamilton Rowan [a] was introduced or named by McClenachan, and received with three cheers. The treaty was thrown to the populace, who placed it upon a pole; a company of about three hundred then proceeded to the French Minister's house, before which some ceremony was performed. The mob then went before Mr. Hammond's house and burnt the treaty with huzzas and acclamations; the same was done before Mr. Bond's and Mr. Bingham's houses. Some glass was broken by the mob, of Mr. Bingham's house. In all this farce, McClenachan is said to have been a leader. The French Minister denied himself to the mob, and has, I believe, conducted himself with strict propriety. Keen sensations are excited in the city at this villainous conduct. I cannot speak with certainty of the opinion of the city as to the treaty, but I am confident that their

[a] Hamilton Rowan was one of the United Irishmen, and had but recently fled from the persecutions of his own country. The indecency of his appearance on such an occasion needs no comment.

feelings are temperate, and that they feel entire confidence in the President, and will support his decision.

## TO MRS. WOLCOTT.

PHILADELPHIA, July 26th, 1795.

On Saturday we had a treaty meeting which the lying Bache calls a general and numerous meeting. I went to the place for the purpose of making observations in company with some of the public officers. There might be fifteen hundred persons in the yard, but I think not more. About half the number went from curiosity and took no part. The actors generally were an ignorant mob, of that class which is most disaffected and violent. Doctor Shippen was chairman; Dallas, Swanwick, Pettit, Muhlenberg, McClenachan, Barker, &c., &c. Poor old Judge McKean was introduced late in the meeting by Dallas and Pettit. These chaps were mounted on a stage for the amusement of the company. A memorial to the President against the treaty was read twice and passed without opposition or debate. Cheers and swinging of hats were the indications of approbation in which the rogues and fools both on and off the stage joined. Blair McClenachan, I believe, introduced the Irish patriot, Hamilton Rowan, to the company, at least his name was mentioned and they swung their hats; even the poor old judge swung his, I presume, because he expected the honor of soon having the fellow to hang for some roguery in this country. Old Blair then threw the treaty to the mob and advised them to "kick it to hell." The mob did what was perhaps as well, they put the paper on a pole and proceeded to the French Minister's house, where they performed some ceremony. The treaty was moreover burned before Mr. Hammond's, Mr. Bond's, and Mr. Bingham's houses. Some of Mr. Bingham's windows were broken and Viscount Noasilles somewhat hurt by attempting to ride over the mob. McClenachan was an actor, as is said, in this burning farce, accompanied by two or three hundred persons.

The city feels keen sensations at this rascally business, which will however do no harm, except when the affair is misrepresented. A plan is evidently laid to burn the treaty in all the great towns and something of the kind will perhaps be done in the country. The reason of the people will however prevail.

The French Minister did not encourage what was done, he is I believe an amiable and honest man.

The French Minister was not at that time understood.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

NEW YORK, July 28, 1795.

Dear Sir,

We have some cause to suspect, though not enough to believe, that our Jacobins meditate serious mischief to certain individuals. It happens that the militia of this city from the complexion of its officers in general, cannot be de-

pended on, and it will be difficult for some time to organize a competent armed substitute. In this situation our eyes turn as a resource in a sudden emergency, upon the military now in the forts, but these we are told are under marching orders. Pray converse confidentially with the Secretary at War, and engage him to suspend the march. Matters in eight or ten days will explain themselves.

How are things truly in Philadelphia? I have good reason to believe that the President before he left Philadelphia, had concluded to ratify the treaty according to the advice of the Senate. Has any thing finally been done, or are we where we were? Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 28, 1795.

You see that attempts are made to stir up a flame, and convulse the country respecting the treaty. Though the actors hitherto are known to be a factious set of men, and their followers generally a contemptible mob, yet from the systematical manner in which they have proceeded, and some curious facts which have recently come to my knowledge, I cannot but suspect foul play by persons not generally suspected.

Every thing is conducted in a mysterious and strange manner, by a certain character here,[a] and to my astonishment I am recently told, that John Rutledge has had a tender of the office of Chief-Justice. By the favour of heaven the commission is not issued, and now I presume it will not be, but how near ruin and disgrace has the country been! Cannot you come and attend the Supreme Court, for a few days the next week? A bed at my house is at your command. If you cannot, pray drop me a line.

Will you reply briefly to a few questions I lately stated, I care not how briefly. Your ideas upon a system matured essentially by you, will enable me to proceed with less hesitation. Indeed, I need some help. There is no comptroller here as yet, and now I have suffered an irreparable loss by the appointment of Mr. Kane, to be assistant cashier of the bank.

PHILADELPHIA, July 30th, 1795.

I have your letter of the 28th. I will see the Secretary of War this morning, and you may rely upon it that the movement will be suspended.

The true state of things in this city is, that the treaty was at first unpopular; the expectations of vain, sanguine men, who considered this country as all powerful, and entitled to dictate, were not satisfied. Every engine of faction was successfully set at work. At present there is more temper and moderation. The truth begins to prevail. I think we shall have no dangerous riots, but one month will determine the fate of our country, so far as depends on ourselves. The extreme hazards of foreign war I do not take into account.

[a] The Secretary of State.

I dare not write, and hardly dare think of what I know and believe, respecting a certain character, whose situation gives him a decided influence. There has as yet, nothing more passed between the government and Mr. Hammond, than a verbal conference, in which the President's opinion respecting the merits of the treaty has been declared to be like that of the Senate. No written memorial has passed, nor have any measures as relative to the ratification been adopted. The ratification of the President has moreover been connected with the repeal of some unknown order, respecting vessels bound with provisions to France, though this was a condition improperly prescribed in my opinion, yet the circumstance might have been mentioned in a manner which would not be offensive, and have assumed the form of a prudent precaution on the part of the President. But what must the British government think of the United States, when they find the treaty clogged with one condition by the Senate, with another by the President, no answer given in a precise form after forty days, no minister in that country to take up negociations proposed by ourselves, the country rising into a flame, their minister's house insulted by a mob, their flag dragged through the streets as in Charleston, and burnt before the doors of their consul, a driveller and a fool appointed Chief-Justice? Can they believe that we desire peace? I shall take immediate measures with two of my colleagues this very day. They are firm and honest men. We will if possible, to use a French phrase, "save our country." You must not think *we* have been to blame for the delay. We have constantly been amused by R., who has said that the President was determined to ratify. The precise state of the business has never been communicated till within a few days; the affairs of his department are solely conducted by himself. Feel no concern, however, for I see a clue which will conduct us through every labyrinth, except that of war. On that point we must take our chance. It would be well if you, or Mr. King or Gov. Jay, could be here some time next week, provided too much speculation would not be excited.

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

HARTFORD, July 30, 1795.

Dear Sir,

We promise ourselves faction will not gain eventually many proselytes in New England, from its attack on the treaty. The President's answer to the addressors is celebrated here among the wisest of his acts, and goes far to check the arts of gainsayers. Upon the weak and unwary it is like a text to a divine from holy writ, in the cause of truth.

Mr. Bradford's death is much regretted, both on account of his personal worth, and the loss of a valuable officer and friend of the government; well fitted to do good in Pennsylvania, where there is a dearth of such characters. Mr. Randolph's resignation occasions some surprise, but no lamentations; many of the warmest advocates for the present measures, are hurt by Mr. Rutledge's appointment, and are unable to account for it, but impute it to want of information of his hostility to the government, or some hidden cause which justifies the measure. We shall be loth to find faction is to be courted at so great a sacrifice of consist-

ency. Mr. Davis is in town on his way to Philadelphia, and I hope you will find him to be the right man. * * * *

Your friend, CHAUNCEY· GOODRICH.

## FROM BENJAMIN GOODHUE.

SALEM, August 1st, 1795.

My Dear Friend,

I cannot refrain while the enemies of our peace and happiness are so peculiarly busy, to drop you a few lines respecting the state of things in this quarter. The Boston Jacobins, ready cocked and primed, as soon as the treaty was promulgated raised an hue and cry, called hastily a town meeting, and aided by that spirit of irritation which exists against Great Britain, without reading the treaty, condemned it in lots, and such an air of terrorism was assumed, as deterred those who wish for examination and order in society, either from being present at the meeting, or if present, opposing their predetermined intentions, and though they may have received a degree of consolation, from being able to kindle and propagate the flame in New York and Philadelphia, yet their mortification must be as great, at not being able to get either the other great commercial towns in the state, or the agricultural interest to be infected with their mania. Indeed, from my observations, both the merchants and farmers generally approve of the treaty as they become acquainted with it, and I have it from good authority that it is the case even in Boston with a very large proportion of their merchants, and is becoming more and more the case, as their passions subside, and the subject is investigated and understood. You may depend on it, that it will not be in the power, either of the inconsiderate or the determinately vicious, to shake the great body, either of the merchants, or the yeomanry of our country, from their attachment to order, or a reverence for their own government. They feel the sweets of peace, and it will not be in the power of the war hawks to change their sentiments for anarchy or war. Your affectionate,

B. GOODHUE.

## TO NOAH WEBSTER.

PHILADELPHIA, August 1, 1795.

I received your letter of the 30th ultimo, and I thank you for your remarks. Various causes prevented me from forming any opinion upon the treaty, until after the rising of the Senate. I have since that time carefully examined it, and compared it with other treaties, and I am satisfied that it is as favourable as could be obtained, or as we had a right under all circumstances to *expect;* perhaps when the nature of our government and the defenceless state of our commerce are calmly considered, it may be affirmed that it is as favourable as we ought to *wish*. It is a much more doubtful point than is commonly imagined, whether it be for the true interest of this country to attain what is the object of universal avidity, a free and unlimited commerce in our own vessels with the world. That

degree of commerce which is necessary to keep us informed of the demands of foreign nations, and to prevent them from setting a price both upon what we sell and what we buy, is indispensable. But I am not clear, that we ought at this time to wish to scatter our wealth and our citizens over every part of the world, and thus expose both to the caprice and injustice of even weak nations. The state of things which we desire cannot be rendered safe without a powerful navy, and this we do not possess, and cannot soon obtain. It is a solemn truth that the United States are ill capable of offensive or exterior exertions; we can defend our country, and we can do little more. It would be impolitic however, at the present moment, to attack existing prejudices on the subject of commerce. The vain opinions which now prevail will be gradually renounced. I therefore approve of the principle on which I find it proposed to defend the treaty, though I believe that still stronger ground might be taken, if the people were in a state of mind to hear offensive, yet interesting truths.

For various reasons which you will hereafter know and approve, I will only say in answer to a part of your letter, that you may feel a perfect confidence and security in the proceedings of the Executive—do not therefore despond, but continue to enlighten the public and defend the treaty. With respect to the future fortunes of our country, I can make no conjectures that will be useful to you. A very short period will discover what we are to expect. We have every thing to hope from the virtue and reason of one part of the community, and every thing to fear from the vice and turbulence of another. It is however certain that the great sections of the United States will not long continue to be agitated as they have been. We must and shall come to some explanation with each other.

## FROM WILLIAM VANS MURRAY.

CAMBRIDGE, E. S., MD., 7th Aug., 1795.

Dear Sir,

About a month since I did myself the pleasure of dropping a line to you, but as it went by the way of the Baltimore post it may have miscarried. I am anxious for a line from you as I am sure you would give me some materials upon the treaty which would help me to sustain attacks that now seem to thicken every day. They come from such of our citizens as go to and return here from Baltimore. As to the mass of the people here, the men of sense and men of property, they wait with firm confidence in the President, that he will act for the best. Yet their bias is against some of the articles, particularly the 3d, giving the British merchant free entrance and trade among the Indian tribes within the limits of the United States, and, indeed, the whole here rather lean against the treaty. They allow, however, with a candour that has always distinguished the people of this peninsula, that the impression of dislike may not be found to be correct, had they the information necessary to a fair judgment which the Senate had and the President has. The advocates for war, though very few, have certainly increased since the discussion has taken place. I never in my life wished for the benefit of an hour's conversation with you as on this business; for you must have grounded reasons flowing from systems, whereas I can do little more

than support the thing politically, and talk wide upon what we have probably avoided. Mr. Hamilton might still do great good by giving the public his luminous pen. There is an accommodation of facts, public documents, conversation, and knowledge, in great capitols and at the seat of government, that places any great transaction and its relations in a point of light which no industry of study in a remote part of country life can ever attain. Faction from thence shoots its poisoned arrows, and from thence also ought truth to exert its arm.

In this country, unless this light is poured upon us in the most remote places, the friends of government and order will stagger about in the dark too frequently. The rallying point must come from those whose station in the government places an accurate knowledge of the best system in their power.

That the President should be so harrassed by the tumultuous proceedings of different towns is what every good citizen must lament. I suspect he will take a middle course, unless he has before this time signed the treaty; that is, send the business back to negociate time away. Whatever you are pleased to communicate shall be considered as strictly confidential, and I shall be much obliged by a few lines. I am, with sincere esteem, &c.,

W. V. MURRAY.

## TO BENJAMIN GOODHUE.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 8th, 1795.

I have received two letters from you, dated the 1st instant. It gives me the most sincere pleasure that New England remains firm and composed. If the extravagances which are fashionable in the other parts of our country were to extend to the northern states, our liberties would soon be lost.

Circumstances of which I will shortly inform you, prevent me from being explicit as to the present state of the treaty. Rely upon it, however, that all will go right, unless events uncontrollable by human foresight occur to blast our prospects.

I have been oppressed with an unsupportable load of business; but I hope Mr. Davis will soon come on to assist me. I shall engage lodgings for you in season; nothing can be done at present. You shall hear from me soon.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

NEW YORK, Aug. 10, 1795.

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter by Saturday's post. The one you enquire about was received.

I incline very much to the opinion that this will be the proper course of conduct in reference to the order to seize our vessels with provisions, viz: to send to our agent the treaty ratified, as advised by the Senate, with this instruction—that if the order for seizing provisions is in force when he receives it, he is to in-

form the British Minister that he has the treaty ratified, but that he is instructed not to exchange the ratification till that order is rescinded, since the United States cannot even give an implied sanction to the principle. At the same time a remonstrance ought to go from this country, well considered and well digested, even to a word, to be delivered against the principle of the order. My reasons for this opinion are summarily these :

1. That in fact we are too much interested in the exemption of provisions from seizure to give even an implied sanction to the contrary pretension.

2. That the exchange of ratifications pending such an order, would give colour to an abusive construction of the XVIIIth article of the treaty, as though it admitted of the seizure of provisions.

3. That this would give cause of umbrage to France, because it would be more than merely to refrain from resisting by force an innovation injurious to her, but it would be to give a sanction to it in the midst of a war.

4. It would be thus construed in our country, and would destroy confidence in the government.

5. It would be scarcely reputable to a nation to conclude a treaty with a power to heal past controversies, at the very moment of new and existing violation of its rights. Yours truly,

A. HAMILTON.

If an order had existed and has been rescinded, the remonstrance ought still to be presented after the exchange of ratifications, as a protest against the principle, &c.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, August 10, 1795.

The treaty has received a most violent opposition from a certain party in most of our great towns, but in the southern states the opposition is pretty general. What the result will be of this combination, is somewhat difficult to predict. As I know that the treaty is the best that could be obtained, and that the true interests of the United States require that it should go into effect, my conduct and opinion will in no degree be affected by the clamour which has been excited.

The villainous artifices by which this ferment has been excited, will be soon unveiled, and I presume that the good sense of the people will once more triumph over faction. I am, however, almost discouraged with respect to the southern states ; the effect of the slave system has been such that I fear our government will never operate with efficacy. Faction, dependence, pride, and turbulence, are too general characteristics of the different states, to admit of that sobriety and order upon which this government is predicated. Indeed, we must of necessity soon come to a sober explanation with that people and know upon what we are to depend. It is impossible to continue long in our present state.

I find that it is true that John Rutledge has been invited to be Chief-Justice, but he is not commissioned and I must presume he will not be after his late conduct. The President will be here shortly.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

BOSTON, August 13th, 1795.

Dear Sir,

The Chamber of Commerce here has held a meeting on the subject of the treaty, and with a remarkable unanimity approved it. They also passed a vote reprobating the attempts everywhere made to excite clamour and discontent. The proceedings are to be transmitted to the President. At Salem the respectable people are acquiescent, and many of them approve, but they think it unadvisable to act. At Newburyport the principal merchants are also well satisfied, and some steps have been taken to bring them to express their opinion, but I am not yet informed of the success. On the whole, it may be safely pronounced that the sober and discreet part of even our seaports, and still more of our country towns, feel a great anxiety lest the treaty should by any means miscarry. It is with no less chagrin than astonishment that I learn this day that the consummation of the business has been delayed by popular clamour. If delay should terminate in refusal, we are ruined. The present system will have finished its destiny. Yours faithfully,

G. CABOT.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 15, 1795.

The President has decided that the treaty shall be ratified and transmitted for exchange immediately, and in my opinion he has decided right. I regret that this was not done long since, as I presume much of the party spirit which has been excited would have been prevented.

A government like ours can rarely take a middle course on any point which interests the public feelings. Delay, for whatever reason, would be construed into a dislike of the treaty itself, and this opinion diffusing among the people would generate the most inveterate factions. Circumstances have happened tending to excite a distrust of the sincerity of this government in the British cabinet, which can be no otherwise explained than by a ratification.

## FROM OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

WINDSOR, Aug. 15, 1795.

Dear Sir,

I am this moment favoured with your obliging letter of the 8th. If the President decides wrong, or does not decide soon, his good fortune will forsake him. N. E. is tolerably quiet, and will be more so as the subject becomes more understood; but I am to be responsible only for Connecticut. That E. R. should not act at all, is less surprising than that J. R. should act like the *devil.*[a] I wait for

[a] Edward and John Rutledge.

the unravelling, when more is to be known, and am in the meantime, and at all times, very sincerely your friend,

OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

You will learn from others that Mrs. Wolcott is well, and that the Connecticut lands are sold to everybody for 1,200,000 dollars on five years credit, two without interest.

WINDSOR, August 20, 1795.

Dear Sir,

Accept my thanks for your letter of the 15th. I am glad the President has done at last, what I am unwilling to believe he ever hesitated about, and the delay of which has not been without hazard and some mischief. The crisis admits not of the appearance of indecision, and much less, of steering any course but one. There is less reason to be anxious for the eastern quarter, than there was some time since. The attempts of a few lawyers, taking their tone from New Haven, to agitate this State, has been unsuccessful and must be abandoned. Rhode Island and Vermont, I apprehend to be out of danger; tho' my information is not so full as might be wished. The current I believe to be turning in Massachusetts, tho' you may perhaps hear of some more obscene town meetings. The declaration of the Boston merchants, and the President's letter to the select men, are good dampers, and together with able defences now circulating, will produce an effect. As I hear nothing from New Hampshire except the first impression at Portsmouth, I infer that Brother Langdon's argument and explanation, that "'tis a damned thing made to plague the French," has by repetition, lost its power. This is all I can tell you about New England; and I very much wish you, when you have leisure, to tell me how virulent the opposition is in all the States south of this, and what effects are to be expected from it. It is not wholly owing to laziness, that nothing more formal has been here wrote on the side of the treaty. We thought it best only to stand prepared for defence, if an attack should be here made, which has not yet been the case; and in the meantime perhaps, to scrape and squib a little, just to keep the humour the right way, and to see to the publishing of what is well wrote elsewhere.

With regard to Mr. Rutledge, it certainly was difficult, after he had come, not to commission him. If the evil is without remedy, we must as in other cases, make the best of it. Believe not, my dear sir, that I have feelings on this occasion which are not common to all well-disposed friends of the Government. Governor Huntington was here yesterday, on his way to Dartmouth, and loves peace so well, that to make sure of it, he wishes we had taken the 12th Article too. Finding him disposed to take credit, I furnished him with what stock I could, for retailing.

We are to have the pleasure of Mrs. Wolcott's company next week, to taste a water-melon; and when I see her, if at no other time, you certainly will be remembered by, Your friend and humble servant,

OLIV. ELLSWORTH.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

BROOKLINE, Aug. 24, 1795.

In answer to your question, it may be said with confidence, that New England will be calm and steady, and that the National Government will lose nothing in the present storm, that depends upon her. It is however, a lamentable truth, that the first impressions upon good men were so erroneous, as to give every encouragement to faction. This delusion was indeed momentary, and having soon been dissipated by reason and information, has been succeeded by a greater anxiety for the success of the negotiation with Britain, than has appeared upon any other occasion since the establishment of the present government. It was in this state of the public mind, that the President's letter appeared, and gave universal satisfaction to the true friends of order in all parts of our country. Even faction and anarchy have acknowledged the merit of this letter. It is a remarkable proof of the instability, or rather, the versatility of popular opinions, that some of those men who execrated the twenty senators for advising a ratification on any terms, are already beginning to censure them for having cavilled at the 12th Article, and thus put at hazard such important benefits as the treaty would secure to this country. I am satisfied if the business should not finally be closed, this sentiment will extend very far, and even if all the rest of the treaty should take effect, if no new agreements can be made on the subject of the 12th Article, and France should, as she will whenever able, establish her colony monopoly, we shall be condemned for refusing this partial benefit.

Mr. Davis will be with you in a day or two after this letter, and can inform you of every thing passing here. With unfeigned respect and unaffected attachment, I remain your faithful friend,

GEORGE CABOT.

BROOKLINE, August 25th, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

I expect that Mr. Davis will set off by to-morrow's stage and be the bearer of this letter. In addition to what you already know of this gentleman, it must be grateful to you to be informed, that those persons who are most intimately acquainted with his merits, unite in opinion that he will prove a most valuable acquisition to the government, inasmuch as he possesses every essential qualification for the office to which he is appointed, in an eminent degree. The testimony of this, since my return from Philadelphia has been so abundant, that I could wish it were mentioned to the President.

I have taken the liberty to assure Mr. Davis, that the inconveniences incidental to a new situation, would be alleviated by every act of kindness and attention from you which friendship would suggest, and have no doubt you will be compensated by the effectual aid and support his labours will afford, after time shall have familiarized the duties of his office. Your faithful friend,

GEORGE CABOT.

FROM WILLIAM VANS MURRAY.

Cambridge, (Md.) 29 Aug., 1795.

Dear Sir,

You have my cordial thanks for your kind and polite attention to my letters; and though I wished extremely to have a line from you, I was aware of your engagements. I do not wish to add so much to your occupations as a new correspondence would do, nor do I expect it, and I write now merely to thank you for the past, and at the same time to tell you what will give you pleasure; that since my last, a better understanding of the treaty has certainly produced a great change in the opinions of those who had rashly and without examination, felt a strong bias against it. We could now get a very strong address upon this subject in favour of the conduct of the Government. I have had thoughts of it, and can only be restrained by a doubt upon the policy of accustoming the citizens to this kind of work. We addressed upon the neutrality, as did others. Some time after, when much perverted use was made of this on the club discussion last winter, many of our best men in Congress began to doubt the soundness of our former policy.

The papers which you so obligingly sent me, I received last night. I had seen Curtius, to whom I confess myself much indebted for the promptness of his excellent remarks, and I had seen the numbers of Camillus. It struck me the 1st and 3d Nos. were by Col. H. Yes Sir, the people were surprised into dislike. A sober examination of the mutual claims, and the dates of infraction, have removed most of the objections. A candid examination of the treaties, from that of Munster to this day, will satisfy, and has satisfied most, that our treaty is as good as Great Britain has given to any other power; better than she has given to any other nation, now in practice, and better than we enjoy with any other nation.

As to the old Dutch principle of *free bottoms, free goods,* it appears to me not worth contending for, nor would I give Great Britain £500 to insert it in our treaty. Mr. Jefferson to my surprise, allowed (to Mr. Hammond) that she had never granted it except to Holland in 1668 and France in 1786. She had granted it *five times.* To Sweden in 1661, to Holland in 1668, to France in 1677, to France in 1713, and to France in 1786; and yet, according to the history of the principle, neither she, nor France, nor Holland have ever, in a single case, gratified the letter or the spirit of the principle, the moment the *casus fœdius* arose. He only who credits the expectations of a millennium, can be the dupe of an engagement that presumes a power of restraint and pure rectitude of conduct, incompatible with the state of human affairs. Of course it has appeared to my undiplomatic eyes, (say Mr. Pinckney of S. C. what he please) that this point which has created great inquietude, is not worth any contention. It is not worth one month's right of fishing on the Banks, as there has never been any nation yet that complied with it, not one—and whatever nation agrees to it with us, does it for some substantial equivalent, and does it delusively.

The President's answer, *per invoice* and *by copy,* to the Philadelphia addresses, pleases me extremely. It is dry, husky, and characteristic of that swelling of

the throat that always accompanies contempt. We are so late in obtaining papers, that we have just received the papers of that time. Inclosed, I send you a little country paper which has a very limited circulation once a week about here. In it I have, as is my custom, paragraphed a little to keep us quiet, as you may see by its marks. I mean next week to ride through the district I represent, and exercise my apostolic powers to the great end of the mission, peace and confidence. I am with great esteem, &c.

WM. V. MURRAY.

## FROM FISHER AMES.

DEDHAM, Sept. 2d, 1795.

Dear Sir,

I returned yesterday from a tour to Newport. I hope by exercise and the coolness of the approaching season, to be able to attend Congress. At present, though I am not sick, I have such puny health as to disqualify me for much exertion. As there was a burning in effigy at Newport a short time before my arrival, I was curious to learn how far it might be deemed an evidence of the anti-government spirit of the citizens. The account I received was this.

A few young men who had lost property by British captures, were incensed against the treaty and Mr. Jay, and thought proper to show their resentment by burning him in effigy; but not more than a dozen men followed the figure in the principal streets, where my informants observed them. Troops of boys however, with fifes and drums, helped to lengthen the line of march. On the whole, no mob ever drew so few of the inhabitants from mere curiosity, to follow the exhibition. On the contrary, the non-attendance of the citizens, may be admitted as a proof of strong disapprobation of the measure. The anti-treaty men were ashamed of the business, and considered it as making their weakness as strong as their violence. It will have the effect, by outraging the feelings of those who abhor all excesses, to turn the public mind more forcibly than it would otherwise go, from the views of the seditious. At Providence, the anti-federal party is very inconsiderable, and I was happy to see in that State, symptoms of a just pride in their present state, as contrasted with their former turbulence and the folly of Boston. I made conversation at all the country taverns, and I think the yeomanry are yet right. They say the men in the government know best what to do, and the President will not see the country wronged, much less wrong it himself. As a speculative question, the country folks do not pretend to understand it, their approbation is not therefore given; but their dislike of the proceedings in the seaports, is extorting it. Some opinions are general and well established; admiration of our Constitution and government, exultation in the happy effects manifested in the general prosperity, aversion to war and land-taxes, confidence in, and almost adoration of the President, and a steady resolution to support the government. Yet with these right opinions, are sown many wrong ones which come from the Chronicle, and the parties that uphold that perfidious gazette. On the whole, it depends I think, on the spirit and firmness of the government itself, to keep the country right. The towns will often, perhaps three

times out of four, yield to the sudden fury of a party. Some time ago I almost despaired. The President we were told, had gone to Mount Vernon, leaving the treaty unratified, and, said Webster's Herald, it will not be ratified until farther negotiations are made. Had that been the case, the friends of order would have been in despair. Now the contest lies between the mobbers and the government, and if there should be no want of spirit, the eventual triumph of the latter may be expected.

My information respecting the state of opinion in Newport &c., may not merit much attention, but I have thought it not improper to trouble you with it. The mob men seem resolved to go to extremities, perhaps because their French paymasters require it of them. Any regular system of government in the U. S. will be an obstacle to the success of the unvaried plan of controlling our affairs by means of our rabble. Therefore we may look for French patronage of the disorganizers here, while they seriously endeavour to set up order in their own country. I have been highly gratified by your answer to my letter, but I do assure you, I do not ask it of you to reply to this. I excuse my breaking in upon your hurry of office only in that way. I hope my countryman, Davis, will sustain in office, the reputation he bore out of it. He was ever esteemed a man of genius and worth.

Congress will draw all eyes upon its proceedings. The south glows with more than torrid heat, if we may believe their gazettes. But what have we to legislate upon regarding the treaty? The clamourers will originate motions to draw it into question if they can find support. The Senate must, as usual, pull up the bridge, and stop the march of the party. *Inter nos*, I fear Dayton will take fire at the clause which prohibits confiscations. His lead would be followed by others whom Giles & Co. could not otherwise influence. I am with esteem, cordially yours,

FISHER AMES.

P. S. The President's answer to Boston is greatly extolled, and I believe has done more towards calming the country, than all the good pieces published in Webster and the Sentinel. The resignation of Randolph excites surprise, the death of Bradford, the Attorney General, as report says, my deep regret.

## FROM WILLIAM SMITH.

CHARLESTON, S. C., Sept. 8th, 1795.

Dear Sir,

* * * The news of the President's ratification of the treaty has produced less irritation here than I anticipated from the violent manner in which the subject was first considered. The first thing which gave a check to the popular current was a pamphlet attributed to me, entitled "A candid examination of the report of the committee," which by proving that the committee were greatly misinformed and that the treaty did not contain so many obnoxious features as was at first believed, induced a considerable change of sentiment among the moderate, and prepared their minds to read with attention and candour *Camillus* and *Curtius*. The violent are ashamed to avow their errors, ignorance and prejudice, but all dispassionate and reasonable men are quiet and tolerably contented

with the treaty which I am persuaded will become more agreeable as it is more understood. The promulgation of Mr. Pinckney's sentiments by his letter to Mr. Randolph, and Mr. Jay's letter has given great satisfaction to some, and overwhelmed others with shame and confusion. These last were displeased with Mr. Jay's appointment because it superseded Mr. Pinckney, and they were resolved beforehand to reprobate this treaty. Neither General Pinckney nor General Washington,[a] who were elected on the committee, attended. The first has behaved with great delicacy and caution, and has said little about the treaty; the last has expressed himself pretty well satisfied. Mr. Rutledge is arrived. His conduct on that occasion must have surprised his friends. I believe he sincerely repents it. His brother E. R., still remains violent as was to be expected; he has a most unconquerable aversion to the British nation, which was not a little increased by the late election which he foolishly attributed to an influence from that quarter. With much esteem, &c.,

WM. SMITH.

I have received a letter from Senator Martin, of North Carolina, approving the treaty as ratified, though he was one of the *virtuous minority*.

[a] William Washington.

# CHAPTER IX.

## SUMMER OF 1795, CONTINUED.

In speaking of the considerations attending the course to be pursued with the British Treaty, a circumstance has been referred to which was supposed to have had some influence upon its fate. This was the detection of part of the private correspondence of the late French Minister. The mode in which it was obtained may best be given in the words of Wolcott's own notes.

### NOTES RELATIVE TO FAUCHET'S LETTER.

The first circumstance connected with the discovery of M. Fauchet's letter, now in the possession of the President, in which I was concerned, was an invitation from Mr. Hammond, the British Minister, to dine with him on Sunday the 26th day of July, which invitation I accepted. At the time appointed I found the company to consist of Mr. Hammond's family, Mr. Strickland, an English gentleman, Mr. Thornton the late Secretary to the British legation, and Mr. Andrew Allen, of Philadelphia.

Before dinner Mr. Hammond took me apart and informed me that he had just received despatches from Lord Grenville, transmitting certain letters from M. Fauchet to the French government, which had been intercepted. The history of these letters as related by Mr. Hammond, was that they were thrown overboard from a French packet, named the Jean Bart, on the approach of an English vessel, but were recovered by an Englishman who plunged into the water after them.

After dinner Mr. Hammond, in a private room read to me in English, the letter, upon which I observed that the information, however new and surprising to me, was attended with circumstances which could not fail to establish a belief that something highly improper had been proposed by Mr. Randolph, and that I considered the information as highly interesting. At the same time I remarked that a discovery of such magnitude could not be permitted to remain

with me, and that it could not be communicated unless I was put in possession of the document necessary to support my allegations.

After considerable conversation at that time, and at one subsequent interview, it was agreed between Mr. Hammond and myself, that the original letter should be delivered to me, upon condition that I should give to Mr. Hammond a copy with my attestation of having received the original, and that it was my true and sincere belief, founded on an acquaintance with M. Fauchet's handwriting, that the said letter was genuine. With this condition I complied, and accordingly on the 28th of July I received the letter and certified a copy which had been prepared by Mr. Thornton.

On the morning of July 28th, I presented the said letter to the Secretary of War and informed him of the foregoing circumstances, who approved of the steps I had taken, and it was agreed by us that, considering the absence of the President, the letter ought to be shown to the Attorney General as soon as possible.

On the 29th of July, the Secretary of War and myself visited the Attorney General at his house in the country and explained the subject fully. It was then agreed that a letter should be written to the President, requesting him to return to Philadelphia. This was done by the Secretary of State on the 31st of July, in consequence of a special application by the Secretary of War and myself for that purpose. On Thursday the 11th of August, the President returned to Philadelphia, and and in the evening of the same day I presented M. Fauchet's letter, before mentioned, with a translation by the Secretary of War, to him, narrating the facts before stated.

The despatch, the contents of which were deemed so important, was dated the 31st October, 1794, addressed to the commissioners of foreign nations, and entitled, "Private Correspondence of the Minister on Politics, No. 10." It was a key to former despatches, treating of the insurrection in Pennsylvania, to which MM. Pétry and La Forest had been privy. These it appears were confined to a bare recital of facts, the minister reserving for his private communications, his comments and certain information of a delicate nature. The source of this information was the Secretary of State. "The precious confessions of Mr. Randolph alone," to quote the words of M. Fauchet, "throw a satisfactory light upon all that comes to pass."

The light that these confessions shed, not only upon the character of passing events, but upon his own, will be seen by a review of the paper.

In speaking of the causes which had led to the insurrection in Pennsylvania, M. Fauchet very justly considered them, as lying deeper than the mere question of excise. It was "indubitably connected with a general explosion, for some time prepared in the public mind; but which this local and precipitate eruption would cause to miscarry, or at least check for a long time." The elements of this explosion he found in "the primitive divisions of opinion, as to the political form of the state, and the limits of the sovereignty of the whole over each state individually sovereign." "These first divisions," he says, "of a nature to be destroyed by time, might now have completely disappeared, if the system of finances, which had its birth place in the cradle of the constitution, had not renewed their vigor under various forms." The distastefulness of the system to some classes is next briefly sketched, and a tendency to a monarchical division of orders is charged upon it. Passing over the intermediate steps in the growth of opposition, he arrives at the situation in which the French revolution had placed things and parties. And here the first circumstance which struck M. Fauchet was, that "the anti-federalists disembarrass themselves of an insignificant denomination, and take that of patriots and republicans. Their adversaries become aristocrats, notwithstanding their efforts to preserve the advantageous illusion of ancient names." The sagacity of the minister forsaw in this movement a great step towards their ultimate success, and we in later times have likewise had occasion to know that there is something in names. The opposition did not stop here. They attacked the treasurer, and the inquiry into his conduct, though fruitless, is noticed as their first victory. "In the meantime popular societies are formed; political ideas concentre themselves." "A concert of declarations and censures against the government arises, at which the latter is even itself astonished." "Such," continues the minis-

ter, "was the situation of things toward the close of the last, and at the beginning of the present year." He passes over the discontents produced, they had "been sent at different periods and in detail." They however are stated to have been created by "the imbecility of the government towards Great Britain," "the coldness towards the French Republic," the system of finance, "in a word the *immoral* and impolitic modes of taxation."

This last point, the excise, was "the principal complaint of the western people, and the ostensible motive of their movements." Their lands were fertile and productive, but deprived of the means of exchanging their fruits, they converted the excess of their produce "into liquors imperfectly fabricated;" the excise "struck at this consoling transformation." Other matters which especially affected the western settlers are mentioned, as the interdiction by Spain of the Mississippi navigation, and the mode of sale of the western lands. "These complaints were systematizing by the conversations of influential men, who retired into those wild countries, and who from principle, or by a series of particular heart burnings, animated discontents already too near to effervescence. At last the local explosion is effected. The western people calculated on being supported by some distinguished characters in the east, and even imagined that they had in the bosom of the government some abettors, who might share in their grievances or their principles." "From what I have detailed above," he adds, "those men might indeed be supposed numerous."

The tone of the sessions of 1793 and 1794, the tendency of Jeffersons's last report, of Madison's resolutions, and the pamphlet production of senator Taylor of Virginia, are mentioned as showing the predilections, which in the opinion of M. Fauchet at least, those "distinguished characters" entertained. In the language of Mr. Taylor, quoted in the despatch, either a revolution or a civil war,

must be the result of the decrepid state of affairs produced by the financiering system. "The first was preparing; the government which had foreseen it reproduced under various forms, the demand of a disposable force, which might put it in a respectable state of defence. Defeated in this measure, who can aver that it may not have hastened the local eruption, in order to make an advantageous division, and to lay the more general storm which it saw gathering? Am I not," said the minister, "authorized in forming this conjecture, from the conversation which the Secretary of State had with me and Le Blanc[a] alone, an account of which you have in my despatch, No. 3?"

This charge is supported by a reference to the supplementary excise act, which authorized coercive measures to enforce obedience to the first, and by the suits commenced against refractory distillers. The despatch continues: "Doubtless the natural consequences from a conduct so decisive and harsh were expected; and before these were manifested, the means of repression had been prepared; this was undoubtedly what Mr. Randolph meant in telling me THAT UNDER PRETEXT OF GIVING ENERGY TO THE GOVERNMENT, IT WAS INTENDED TO INTRODUCE ABSOLUTE POWER, AND TO MISLEAD THE PRESIDENT INTO PATHS WHICH WOULD CONDUCT HIM TO UNPOPULARITY."

That such was the motive of the government is further argued, from the alleged disproportion of the force employed, to the object to be effected, an allegation loudly made at the time, and that too by those who knew the contrary to be the fact. The military part of the suppression is imputed to Hamilton, who also had magnified the danger, alarming the citizens "for the fate of the constitution while in reality it threatened only the ministers." The pacific measures are attributed to Mr. Randolph.

So far M. Fauchet as to the causes of the "explosion,"

[a] M. Fauchet's Secretary.

and the secret views of the two parties. The succeeding paragraphs are of sufficient importance to quote entire.

"In the meantime, although there was a certainty of having an army, yet it was necessary to assure themselves of coöperation, among the men whose patriotic reputation might influence their party, and whose lukewarmness, or want of energy in the existing conjunctures, might compromit the success of their plans. Of all the governors whose duty it was to appear at the head of the requisitions, the governor of Pennsylvania [a] alone enjoyed the name of republican. His opinions of the Secretary of the Treasury, and of his systems, were known to be unfavourable. The Secretary of this State [b] possessed great influence in the popular society of Philadelphia, which in its turn influenced those of other states; of course he merited attention. It appears therefore, that these men with others unknown to me, all having without doubt Randolph at their head, were balancing to decide on their party. Two or three days before the proclamation was published, and of course before the cabinet had resolved on its measures, Mr. Randolph came to see me with an air of great eagerness, and made to me the overtures of which I have given you an account in my No. 6. Thus with some thousands of dollars, the republic could have decided on civil war or on peace! THUS THE CONSCIENCES OF THE PRETENDED PATRIOTS OF AMERICA, ALREADY HAVE THEIR PRICES! IT IS VERY TRUE THAT THE CERTAINTY OF THESE CONCLUSIONS, PAINFUL TO BE DRAWN, WILL FOREVER EXIST IN OUR ARCHIVES! WHAT WILL BE THE OLD AGE OF THIS GOVERNMENT IF IT IS THUS EARLY DECREPID!

Such, citizen, is the evident consequence of the system of finances conceived by Mr. Hamilton. He has made of a whole nation a stock jobbing, speculating, selfish people. Riches alone here fix consideration; and as no one likes to be despised, they are universally sought after. Nevertheless this depravity has not yet embraced the mass of the people. The effects of this pernicious system have as yet but slightly touched them. Still there are patriots of whom I delight to entertain an idea worthy of that imposing title. Consult MONROE, he is of this number; he had apprised me of the men, whom the current of events had dragged along, as bodies devoid of weight. His friend MADISON is also an honest man. JEFFERSON on whom the patriots cast their eyes to succeed the President, had foreseen these crises; he prudently retired in order to avoid making a figure against his inclination in scenes, the secret of which will soon or late be brought to light.

As soon as it was decided that the French republic purchased no men to do their duty, there were to be seen individuals, about whose conduct the government could at least form uneasy conjectures, giving themselves up with a scandalous ostentation to its views, and even seconding its declarations. The popular societies soon emitted resolutions stamped with the same spirit, and who although they may have been advised by a love of order, might nevertheless have omitted, or uttered them with less solemnity. Then were seen coming from the very men whom we have been accustomed to regard, as having little friendship for the

[a] Mifflin. [b] Dallas.

system of the treasurer, harangues without end, in order to give a new direction to the public mind. The militia, however, manifest some repugnance, particularly in Pennsylvania, for the service to which they were called. Several officers resign, at last by excursions or harangues, incomplete requisitions are obtained, and scattered volunteer corps from different parts make up the deficiency. How much more interesting than the changeable men whom I have painted above, were those plain citizens who answered the solicitations which were made to them, to join the volunteers.

If we are required we will march, because we do not wish not to have a government, but to arm ourselves as volunteers, would be in appearance subscribing implicitly to the excise system we reprobate.

What I have said above, authorizes our resting on the opinion, become incontestible, that in the crisis for restoring order, the true question was the destruction or the triumph of the treasurer's plans," [a]

M. Fauchet next unfolded his views of the result attained by these manœuvres of Mr. Hamilton, in thus bringing good (to himself) out of evil, viz: that the skilful direction given by him to the insurrection, would actually strengthen his position, and that his personal presence with the army "must attach it more than ever to his party." The remainder of the despatch was occupied with further imputations on the conduct and motives of the Secretary of the Treasury in remaining with the army, and sundry philosophical speculations on the probable result of the affair.

Such was the celebrated despatch of Fauchet, a paper which, as respects the motives of opposition to the Washington administration and the origin of the rebellion, presents in many respects, a shrewd and penetrating, although a partial view. The direct causes of dissatisfaction and of resistance among the whiskey distillers of the western parts of Pennsylvania and Virginia, were simple enough. Wild and lawless as the inhabitants of frontier countries are apt to be, removed from the strong influences which exist in a thickly settled and educated population, where the observance of the laws is habitual, because justice is

[a] The foregoing extracts are taken from Mr. Pickering's translation. The paper will also be found at length in the pamphlet published by Mr. Randolph, mentioned below.

always at hand, and where the restraints of society and of religion would alone enforce them, a tax directly felt, however beneficial or necessary to the community, was naturally a source of irritation. But this irritation would have subsided as time and reason accustomed them to its burden, if the intrigues of others, interested in rendering the measures of the administration unpopular, had not nursed it into strength and vigor. The malcontents did indeed, suppose that they would be "supported by some distinguished characters in the east," that they had "even in the bosom of the government some abettors, who might share in their grievances or their principles." The federalists as we have seen, entertained the same suspicions, and subsequent events and disclosures have left little room to doubt that the expectations of the first and the fears of the latter, did not rest on mere supposition, or Fauchet reason on shrewd conjecture alone. Be this as it may, the result shows that the vigorous means adopted for the suppression of the movement, was the true policy of the administration, and prevented a local outbreak from becoming, in the hands of a faction, "a revolution or a civil war." Whether the outbreak was stimulated by the administration for the purpose of strangling that in the cradle which it could not master in its strength, as M. Fauchet supposes, the written history of the rebellion, as well as Washington's own character, affords an opportunity of judging.

The possession of this paper was interesting as disclosing the kind of observation to which we were subjected from abroad, the views entertained by France of the situation of parties here, and the use she was disposed to make of their existence. It was also of deep importance in showing the relations between a high officer of our own government and the confidential agent of another. The reference to the "precious confessions" which Fauchet had not trusted to his secret associates, the conversation

of the Secretary with himself and Le Blanc, on which he founded the conjecture that the government privately instigated the rebellion, and which had been detailed in the secret despatch No. 3; the information given him of the intention to raise up a throne for Washington on the foundation of ruined popularity; and finally, the "overtures" of which he had given an account in No. 6, and the fatal inferences of his own comments upon them, (comments as emphatic as the parting words of Jugurtha) could, uncontradicted, leave no doubt that venality was not confined to *Roman* Senators.

In consequence of the request, as before stated, Washington hastened his return to Philadelphia, where he arrived on the 11th of August, and Wolcott immediately communicated to him the letter and the circumstances under which he received it. No immediate action was had until the subject of the treaty was disposed of. In the mean time, the President, as he could not adjudge Mr. Randolph guilty unheard, appears in no wise to have altered his manner towards him. On this account he was afterwards charged by the latter with hypocrisy. The subject of ratification was again brought before the council the day after Washington's return. The Secretary of State alone maintained, that during the existence of the provision order, and the war between France and England, the ratification ought not to take place. The other members were in favor of an unconditional ratification, except as to the 12th Article, to be transmitted with a memorial against the order, and this course was adopted by the President and executed on the 14th. It appears from a letter to Mr. Randolph of the 22d July,[a] that this had been his determination prior to his receiving Fauchet's despatch. The final catastrophe was still delayed by the necessity of having the same countersign to the

[a] See the letter in Spark's Writings of Washington, XI. p. 35.

copies as to the original[a]. On the 19th a cabinet council was held, and the dispatch for the first time placed in Mr. Randolph's hands. The President had previously submitted through Wolcott, several questions as to the manner in which its contents should be made known to him. These, together with an account of the interview, will appear from the letter to Judge Marshall, given below. Mr. Randolph on the same day tendered his resignation. M. Fauchet was at this time on the eve of departure for France, and Mr. Randolph proceeded to Newport from whence he was to sail, and there had an interview with him. The result of it was the transmission by the late minister to his successor at Philadelphia, of a species of certificate, which together with extracts from Nos. 3 and 6, was by M. Adet delivered to Randolph. A copy of No. 10 had already been furnished him by the President's order, as well as information as to the manner in which it was obtained[b]. These other papers will be noticed in order. For the present, the affair was not divulged by the Cabinet.

The following letter to Marshall was written on the 9th of June 1806, in consequence of a request of the latter to be furnished with information how far Washington's disposition to ratify the treaty was affected by the knowledge of Fauchet's dispatch. The question has since been set at rest by the publication of Washington's letters.

TO JOHN MARSHALL.

I received in due season, your highly esteemed favour of April 21st, in which you refer to an assertion which has been frequently made "that General Washington was disposed to withhold his ratification of the treaty negotiated by Mr. Jay, until the intercepted letter of M. Fauchet was placed in his hands," and in which you request me to give you the details of that transaction. I consider it my duty to comply with your request, and take the liberty to assure you that a

[a] See Washington's letter to Randolph of Sept. 27th, 1795, in Randolph's "Vindication of his resignation," p. 20.

[b] For Washington's reply, see "Vindication," p. 20. See also, Washington to O. Wolcott, Oct. 2d, 1795, infra.

variety of very pressing avocations, and the necessity I have been under of consulting my papers, have been the only causes which have delayed my reply to this period.

It is well known that the policy of instituting any negociation with Great Britain was severely censured from the time this measure was first resolved on, and that unusual exertions were made to prejudice the public mind against every result which could be reasonably expected. You are also fully apprised that when the treaty was laid before the Senate, the President, although he was not well satisfied with several of its provisions, determined that he would ratify it, if so advised by that body. As the advisory act of the Senate was passed on the 24th of June, and the ratification did not take place till about the middle of August, the object of this letter is to assign the causes which in my opinion, occasioned the delay.

The first measure of the President in relation to the treaty after the close of the session, of which I have any knowledge, was a direction to Mr. Randolph to communicate it to the French Minister.

Soon after, the following questions were agitated, upon which the President required the opinions of the heads of departments in writing. "1st. Is, or is not the resolution of the Senate of the 24th of June intended to be the final act of that body, or do they expect that the new article which is proposed shall be submitted to them before the treaty takes effect? 2d. Does, or does not the constitution permit the President to ratify the treaty without submitting the new article, after it shall have been agreed to by the British King, to the Senate for their further advice and consent?" The report which I delivered was dated the 30th of June, but the discussions occasioned by these questions and by the consideration of the reply which was directed to be given to the objections of the French Minister against the treaty were not terminated before the 5th of July.

By this time, artful and well digested publications appeared in the newspapers. The public passions were considerably excited against the treaty, and it was easy to perceive that an extensive and concerted opposition was formed. In this state of things, inofficial information was received that an order had been issued by the British government authorizing the capture of American vessels laden with provisions and bound to France.

It was contended that this information ought to induce the President to suspend the act of ratification.

Three opinions were communicated to the President. 1st. That he should suspend the ratification until he was informed of the existence of the order, and in case it was found to exist, that he should refuse a ratification until the order was revoked. 2d. To ratify the treaty in the mode advised by the Senate, but at the same time to prepare a note to accompany the exchange of ratification, declaring that nothing in the treaty could, in the opinion of the President, justify such an order for detaining provision vessels as was reported to be in existence. The principles of the advocates of this opinion will be found in a letter from Col. Pickering to Mr. Monroe, dated the 12th September, 1795. 3d. The President ought to ratify the treaty as advised by the Senate, and transmit it to an American minister in London with an instruction not to exchange the ratifica-

tions till the provision order was rescinded; or if the order had existed but was revoked at the time, then to accompany the ratification with a remonstrance against the principle on which the order was supposed to be founded.

The first opinion was supported by Mr. Randolph; the second by the other Secretaries and Attorney-General; the third was suggested by Mr. Hamilton.[a]

When the President discovered that a diversity of opinion existed as to the course which he ought to pursue, he directed Mr. Randolph to prepare draughts of instructions for the minister or agent who might be designated for London, and a memorial or note for the British Minister, which after being presented to the other Secretaries and Attorney-General were to be transmitted, accompanied with their observations thereon, to Mount Vernon.

After the President's departure from Philadelphia, the public ferment increased. In one instance, at least, as I was informed by the author himself, a series of publications in opposition to the treaty, and addressed directly to the President, were instigated by Mr. Randolph. Owing to indisposition or some other cause, but little progress was made in preparing the instructions and memorial, and intimations were circulated that the President was disposed to withhold his ratification.

The first intimation I received of the existence of Fauchet's letter, was from Mr. Hammond, on the 26th of July; but it was not till the 28th that I could persuade him to deliver me the original letter, without possessing which I did not consider it prudent to speak on the subject to any person whatever. On the evening of the 28th, I communicated Fauchet's letter to Col. Pickering, and it was concluded between us to show it to Mr. Bradford, the Attorney-General, who was then at his seat in the country. We consulted with Mr. Bradford on the 29th, and it was agreed to request the President to return to Philadelphia. The letter expressing this wish was written the 31st. The President arrived the 11th of August, when I immediately placed Fauchet's letter in his hands, mentioning at the same time the circumstances under which I received it.

The consideration of all questions of a general nature was necessarily suspended until that which affected Mr. Randolph could be disposed of. That you may judge for yourself of the President's impressions, I shall transcribe a note in his handwriting which he delivered to me and which has constantly remained in my possession.

"At what time should Mr. F's letter be made known to Mr. R.?

"What will be the best mode of doing it?—In presence of the Secretaries and Attorney-General.

"If the explanations given by the latter are not satisfactory, whether, besides removal, are any other measures proper to be taken, and what?

"Would an application to Mr. A. to see the paragraphs in Nos. 3 and 6, alluded to in Fauchet's letter, be proper? These might condemn or acquit unequivocally. And if innocent, whether R. will not apply for them if I do not?

"If upon the investigation of this subject, it should appear less dark than at

[a] See his letter of Aug. 10, 1795, *infra*.

present, but not so clear as to restore confidence, in what light, and on what ground is the removal to appear before the public?

"What immediate steps are necessary to be taken as soon as the removal of R. is resolved on, if that should be the case, with respect to the archives in that office?

"If the letter of F. is the only evidence and that thought sufficient to the removal, what would be the consequence of giving the letter to the public without any comments, as the ground on which the measure of the Executive respecting the removal is founded? It would speak for itself; a part, without the whole, might be charged with unfairness. The public would expect reasons for the sudden removal of so high an officer, and it will be found not easy to avoid saying too little or too much upon such an occasion, as it is not to be expected that the removed officer will acquiesce without attempting a justification, or at least to do away by explanation the sting of the letter of accusation; unless he was let down easily, to do which I see no way; for if he is guilty of what is charged, he merits no favour, and if he is not, he will accept of none; and it is not difficult to perceive what turn he and his friends will give to the act, namely, that his friendship for the French nation, and his opposition to a complete ratification have been the cause."

The two first of these questions were decided by the President, uninfluenced, as far as my knowledge and belief extends, by any suggestions from the officers of government. He was greatly dissatisfied that the instructions and memorial had not been prepared and submitted to the consideration of the Secretaries and Attorney-General that their reports might be formed, and he peremptorily resolved that whether Mr. Randolph was innocent or culpable, he would require of him the performance of a service which was his official duty, and which ought to have been long before completed.

It was my earnest wish to be excused from being present at the interview, when Fauchet's letter was delivered to Mr. Randolph. The President, however, determined otherwise, and inserted his decision on the note I have transcribed. He observed, that Fauchet's letter had necessarily excited *suspicions:* that it was proper that the officers of government, equally with himself, should possess the same opportunities of having those suspicions removed or established; and that notwithstanding the long connection which had subsisted between Mr. Randolph and himself, he was persuaded that any explanations that would satisfy his own mind would also be satisfactory to the officers of the government. After mature consideration it was considered to be improper to make any application to Mr. Adet; that it was improbable that Mr. Adet would permit his records to be inspected; that neither Fauchet's dispatch nor any certificate of the French Minister could be regarded as conclusive evidence in favour of or against Mr. Randolph. That Mr. Randolph's conduct at the time an explanation was required would probably furnish the best means of discovering his true situation and of duly estimating the defence he might make.

When the letter was delivered to Mr. Randolph, the President requested him to read it and to make such observations thereon as he thought proper. He silently perused it with composure till he arrived at the passage which refers to

his "precious confessions," when his embarrassment was manifest. After a short hesitation, he proceeded to look over the letter with great attention. When the perusal was completed, he said with a smile which I thought forced, "Yes, sir, I will explain what I know." He then commenced reading the letter by paragraphs, and though a great part of it contained nothing interesting to himself, yet he commented on every part. His remarks were very desultory, and it was evident that he was considering what explanations he should give of the most material passages. As he was not interrupted, it was, however, impossible to speak with precision on one subject while his reflections were employed on other subjects. When he arrived at the passage in which Fauchet refers to the overtures mentioned in No. 6, and the "tariff" which regulated the consciences of certain "pretended patriots," his conduct was very remarkable. He expressed no strong emotion, no resentment against Fauchet. He declared that he could not certainly tell what was intended by such remarks. He said that he indeed recollected having been informed that Mr. Hammond and other persons in New York, were contriving measures to destroy Governor Clinton, the French Minister, and himself, and that he had inquired of Mr. Fauchet whether he could not by his flour contractors provide the means of defeating their machinations. He asserted, however, that he had never received or proposed to receive money for his own use or that of any other person, and had never made any improper communications of the measures of government.

One question only was put to Mr. Randolph, namely, how he intended to be understood when he represented Mr. Hammond as contriving to destroy Governor Clinton, Mr. Fauchet, and himself? His answer was, that their influence and popularity were to be destroyed.

Mr. Randolph retired for a short time, but he must have felt that neither the manner nor the matter of his explanations could afford any degree of satisfaction. The result was a proposal by Mr. Randolph of an immediate resignation, which he promised to communicate in writing. Mr. Randolph has represented that his proposal to resign was accompanied by expressions of resentment at the treatment he had received. Although his letter of resignation places the affair on this ground, yet my impressions of what happened during the personal interview are very different.

The circumstances which I have narrated, will show how the President was employed from the close of the session of the Senate in June, till he ratified the treaty in August. That his first determination was to ratify, is certain, and that he ever changed this determination has never been proved. The provision order of the British government certainly presented a question of some difficulty, and different opinions were entertained of the manner in which it ought to influence the President's measures. This question was under consideration when the President left Philadelphia. It was his established and well-known practice to reserve his sentiments on questions of importance till as late a period as was convenient before his formal decisions were to be made. It was Mr. Randolph's duty to prepare the papers which were to bring the questions relating to the treaty to a final issue, and this duty was delayed by him longer than was expected. A letter from the President to Mr. Randolph, dated July 22d, may be understood

to convey an idea that the treaty would not be ratified while the provision order was supposed to be in existence ; but this is not the necessary, nor perhaps even the most natural interpretation of that letter. The President knew that this would be Mr. Randolph's advice, and he might not think it proper to controul that opinion at that time. The object of the letter was to prevent the increase of popular passion, by causing it to be known that so far as respected the merits of the treaty he had determined to pursue the advice of the Senate, and from respect to Mr. Randolph he might feel inclined to leave every collateral question open to discussion. Such, certainly was the manner in which the subject was treated by him after his return to Philadelphia. I have no knowledge what verbal communications were authorized by the President, or were actually made by Mr. Randolph to Mr. Hammond. I regret that I have not been able to write this letter sooner, and I assure you that I will ever execute your commands in the best manner in my power.

The President shortly after the conclusion of this affair returned to Mount Vernon.

TO THE PRESIDENT.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 26th, 1795.

This city is anxiously waiting for Mr. Randolph's explanation ; various reports, much to his prejudice are in circulation. These are occasioned by communications from Mr. Hammond's family connections (as is supposed) or by Mr. R's. conversations, which are calculated to create surmises. I believe him to be very desperate and malignant in his feelings, and that he will accomplish all the mischief in his power. Mr. Dallas, is doubtless, prime councillor and confidant. It is reported that Mr. R. has said that a communication was made to Mr. Adet, that the treaty would not be ratified, unless the British revoked any order which might exist for intercepting our provision vessels destined for France, and that the President's ratification is a violation of this promise. If this is a fact, it proves that a regard for truth and candour is renounced. It is fortunate however, that the most direct proof exists that Mr. Randolph has repeatedly admitted that the ratification was not inconsistent with any prior engagement of the President. What unauthorized declarations may have been made to Mr. Adet, no person can conjecture ; the most indiscreet and improper would not be incredible. There have been several riots in Boston among the lower classes of people. The spirit was not suppressed at the date of my last advices. The great body of the people are firm and steady, though I perceive that a spirit of enquiry is extending with no small anxiety to discover the cause of these commotions. It is doubtless an enigma, that men who are governed more by sudden impulses than by reason, should become riotous, without any apparent cause, or definite object in view. I firmly believe that these things will be shortly explained to the utter confusion of their abettors and instigators.

## TO JEDEDIAH MORSE.

PHILA., Sept. 26th, 1795.

I have to acknowledge and thank you for your obliging letter of the 10th inst. The arrangement you mention would give me infinite pleasure and I doubt not would be advantageous to the public. It has been brought under consideration, but what will be the result cannot be known. In our affairs there are many relations which separately considered appear unimportant, yet in the aggregate possess great influence. No decision has come to my knowledge.

The temper of the country is doubtless as you suppose it to be ; but our affairs are not exempt from considerable danger. I have no doubt that there exists a general combination to involve the United States in trouble, and though the numbers who are united in this design are inconsiderable, yet by their union and the address with which they manage every public discontent, they may possibly prevail.

I doubt not that men of reflection with you, are anxions to investigate the real source of those agitations which successively happen in our great towns. It is certain that they do not proceed from public misfortunes or from a sense of actual oppression. What do these things portend ?

The abrupt resignation of Mr. Randolph, his journey to Rhode Island, a letter which he has published to the President, and the reports which are here circulating, and which may reach you, will, I am confident, strongly excite the public curiosity. It is not the time for me, in point of propriety, to say more on the subject than that nothing ought to be taken for granted against those who *remain* in office. Mr. Randolph's letter will be understood to intimate that something is amiss, and that he says he is on the right side. Some others are on the wrong or his suggestions are unfounded. Time will discover how these matters are, and truth will, I presume, prevail.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA September 26th, 1795.

I have received your letter of the 20th, and regret the cause which deprived me of the pleasure of seeing you.

Nothing is known of the authors to whom you allude. The "features of the treaty" were, doubtless, painted by Dallas.[a] Doctors Logan and Lieb, Bache, Beckley, T. L. Shippen, are much suspected. S. Sayre, of New Jersey, is, I understand very violent. Perhaps the avowed intemperance of these men against the government is the only evidence against them. I can furnish no direct proof.

Mr. Randolph has published a preface which you have seen ; this is the opening of a new and very extraordinary campaign. Perhaps you know something of

[a] The authorship was denied by Mr. Dallas.

the cause of his hostility. I consider Mr. R. as perfectly desperate and malignant. He will do all the mischief in his power. His long acquaintance with our affairs, the predominating influence which he possessed in those which concerned his own department, and his skill in misrepresentation, furnish him with important advantages. Dallas is councillor in all his councils, and will of course prune away many indiscretions and render a bad case as plausible as the nature of it will admit. I rely, however, upon the sense and virtue of the public and trust that the truth will prevail.

The public affairs are certainly in a critical state. I do not clearly see how those of the Treasury are to be managed. Our foreign resources are dried up, our domestic are deeply anticipated; at least as respects the bank. Banks are multiplying like mushrooms. The prices of all our exports are enhanced by paper negociations and unfounded projects, so that no foreign market will indemnify the shippers; our commerce is harrassed by the war and our internal revenue unproductive of the expected sums, owing to prejudice, combination and the want of competent officers. Usury absorbs much of that capital which might be calculated upon as a resource, if visionary speculations could be destroyed.

You know, however, that I shall do the best in my power, and that intimations from you will always be thankfully received.

## TO FREDERICK WOLCOTT.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 29, 1795.

The resignation of Mr. Randolph and certain subsequent appearances, will have interested the public curiosity on that subject. I cannot with propriety write you a history of the affair, though I wish to do it. The reports of infidelity to the United States which are circulated, are not entirely true. Yet it is true that I have lost all confidence in the integrity of Mr. R. and believe that but for a fortunate discovery, our affairs would have been ruined by him.

There is much bluster about the virtue of this country, but it has little influence with many who make the profession of it. Young as this country is, and virtuous as it is inferred to be from this circumstance, we have as wicked men among us as are to be found in any other. Faction has received an organization as systematical, and acquired a malignity as inveterate, as in much older countries, and unless the people can be soon undeceived, they will find themselves in a bad predicament.

Mr. Randolph is soon to publish a vindication of his conduct. This will open a scene which will be interesting, and the result will show what we have to hope or to fear from party spirit.

It is a principle with me never to fear or despond, and on this ground I predict that every thing will prove fortunate for our country, even the machinations of its enemies.

## FROM WILLIAM VANS MURRAY.

CAMBRIDGE, E. S , Md., 2d Oct., 1795.

My Dear Sir,

I am very much obliged to you for your favour of the 25th September, which I just now received. Mr. R's. affair has struck me exceedingly. The report here was that he had given Fauchet a hint about French guineas, a thing I cannot believe ; but it must be explained. So much has been said, that much must be written to explain. Indeed I am quite in the dark, further than the mere report to which I allude, for from R's. prefatory note to Brown the printer, nothing can be collected. I assure you it is not understood here that you, or any of the administration are implicated. F. always seemed to me to be a melancholy, bilious man.

The General Court for the eastern shore of this State, were lately convened at Easton. At this court were a great collection of very respectable men from the eight counties of the E. S. as well as some from the Western Shore. The treaty occasionally became the topic. I do assure you that by nine-tenths of the gentlemen collected from all the counties the treaty was approved, and the fiat of our good President the order of the day. I dined with the Judges, Attorney General, Mr. Pinkney, a member of the council, a remarkably eloquent young man, and some others, and the whole tide of talk and of toasts was with the government and the treaty, and an execration of the Jacobin principles.

I most seriously however, see the temper of the Southern States swelling into gall and mischief. This will vent itself in violent declamatory speeches in Congress. It will particularly show itself on the question of appropriating a sum provisionally for the drafts of the Commissioners under the treaty. You see I do not despair of a majority even on that question. They will have a majority on most questions, but this majority is composed of different materials. Ten or twelve of them will shrink from the precipice of war, when they are brought up to it. Firmness in the Executive will most assuredly save us from internal convulsions. Our country is unfortunately formed for the preparatory steps to civil war and confusion, through the licentiousness of the press. But there are great causes, I hope, in operation, which will counteract this evil tendency. The people in towns may mob and rouse, but I do believe those in the country cannot soon be brought to the service of sedition. It will be all talk and writing.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT. [a]

MOUNT VERNON, 2d Oct., 1795.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 26th ultimo was received yesterday. It is not wonderful that Mr. Randolph's late conduct, and the publication of his letter to me, should have excited an anxious curiosity to know what his explanations will be ; but it is wonderful that so much time should be required to give birth to them.

[a] Vide Sparks' Writings of Washington, XI. p. 76

Embarrassed, as it is to be apprehended he is, in this business, his object I conceive must be to gain time, to puzzle and to try if he cannot discover inconsistencies in the conduct of others relative to it. On no other ground can I account for his letter to me dated the 21st ult., which with his other two of the 15th, and my reply to the whole, I herewith inclose for the information of yourself and Col. Pickering *only*.

His letters of the 15th received no acknowledgement; and at first I hesitated whether to give any to that of the 21st. After a while, I thought of referring him to you for information on those points which it was evidently as much or more in your power than in mine to give him; but finally, I conceived it most eligible to furnish him with no pretexts, and therefore wrote what you will see in the copy. I did it, because if delay was his object, it would be promoted by my silence, and because, (which probably would have answered his purposes still better) it might have afforded him some ground for saying he was doomed to be a victim, and with a view to accomplish it, the means to his vindication were denied or withheld. These reasons, added to a disposition to do him all manner of justice, induced me to give him concise answers to all his queries as far as the means were within my power, although fully convinced in my own mind of the insidious tendency of them. Whether similar enquiries have been made of you, or of Col. Pickering, or both, by him, I know not. If they have, to see if he could not involve inconsistencies in the answers has been his aim. And to know what kind of superstructure he might build on the information he has obtained, if any, from M. Fauchet, it was necessary to ascertain in the first place, whether the government was in possession of any part of that gentleman's letters numbered 3 and 6, by which this superstructure might be endangered. I was on the point once, of hinting to him that I hoped nothing in his vindication would render it necessary to publish the whole of M. Fauchet's letter, but on second thoughts declined it, lest he should consider it as a threat, and make an improper use of it.

As I shall be in Philadelphia shortly, I will not add on this subject; but from you, if anything more transpires, I shall be glad to hear. The present enclosures may remain in your hands until I return to the city. With very great esteem and regard, I am dear sir, always yours,

GO: WASHINGTON.

The substance of Washington's reply to Randolph, is sufficiently given in the following:[a]

FROM EDMUND RANDOLPH.

PHILADELPHIA, October 2, 1795.

Sir,

I yesterday received from the President a letter dated on the 27th of September, 1795, containing in answer to mine of the 21st, the following clauses:

[a] The letter itself will be found in Sparks' Writings of Washington, XI. p. 75.

"It is not in my power to inform you at what time Mr. Hammond put the intercepted letter of Mr. Fauchet into the hands of Mr. Wolcott. I had no intimation of the existence of such a letter, until after my arrival in Philadelphia, the 11th of August. When Lord Grenville first obtained that letter, and when the British Minister here received it from him, are facts with which I am entirely unacquainted.

"I have never seen, in whole or in part, Mr. Fauchet's despatches, numbered three and six; nor do I possess any document or knowledge of papers which have affinity to the subject in question."

As the British Minister conveyed through your hands this business to the President, I hold myself authorized to inquire from you into some material facts, as they probably rest in your knowledge. These are, as to the time when Mr. Hammond put the letter into your hands; as to Lord Grenville, Mr. Hammond, or yourself, having seen or been possessed of Nos. 3 and 6, or either of them, in or out of cipher; and as to there being any other paper connected with this affair which may be brought up in my absence. If you have heard the time about which Lord Grenville first obtained the letter, and when the British Minister here received it from him, information of it will tend to elucidate some other points. I am, sir, your humble servant,

EDM. RANDOLPH.

## TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

PHILADELPHIA, October 2d, 1795.

I have received your letter of this date, and readily reply to your enquiries. Mr. Fauchet's letter, to which you allude, was delivered to me by Mr. Hammond, on the 28th of July, and on the evening of the 11th of August I presented it to the President.

I have never seen or been possessed of Mr. Fauchet's letters, numbered 3 or 6, or either of them, in or out of cypher, and I have no knowledge whether they, or either of them have been seen by Lord Grenville, or Mr. Hammond. It is impossible for me to say, whether any other document may be hereafter brought into view as connected with the subject in question. Perhaps something will depend upon the manner in which the discussion of this affair may be managed on your part, as it may render an inquiry after other papers necessary. You may be assured however, that nothing has been at any time concealed by me to your prejudice. The letter which I received from Mr. Hammond was, as I have been informed, taken from the "Jean Bart," a French vessel. I do not know the time when it was received by Lord Grenville, or Mr. Hammond. It rests in my memory however, that Mr. Hammond informed me that the letter had been received by him but a short time before it was presented to me, but of this fact I am not certain. I am, sir, your humble servant.

## FROM EDMUND RANDOLPH.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 8th, 1795.

Sir,

You mistook me if you supposed that I meant to propound to you any question, the answer to which might prevent the appearance of any paper whatever. I know that this must depend upon the head of the Executive, and I put at defiance all papers which now are, or hereafter may be seen. I only wished to learn before my departure for Virginia, whether anything more than the letter No. 10, had been used in Mr. Hammond's machination, so as to be able to prepare how to repel it.

It is material however to understand what observations, or message from Mr. Hammond or his government, accompanied the communication of the letter to you, in order that they might be transmitted to the President, for if I am to judge from some hints which have been given in the public prints, and from other data, I have reason to conclude that Mr. Hammond was particularly instructed upon the occasion. In short, candor entitles me to expect that you will not hesitate to give me this information. I am, sir, your humble servant,

EDM. RANDOLPH.

## TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 8th, 1795.

Notwithstanding I am convinced that a knowledge of the minute circumstances mentioned in your letter of this date cannot be material to your defence, and though you have already been particularly informed of the manner in which M. Fauchet's letter was conveyed to the President; yet I mean not to incur the imputation of wanting candor by forbearing a reply to your enquiry.

When the existence of the intercepted letter was first mentioned to me by Mr. Hammond, he did not intimate or request that its contents might be communicated to the President. It was my own suggestion that the letter ought to be delivered to me for that purpose. To this Mr. Hammond finally assented, upon the condition that a copy certified by me should remain in his hands. My motive for wishing to obtain the original letter, will readily be discerned; without possessing it, I could not safely venture to make any representation of its contents, and I felt no disposition to be the secret depository of facts, affecting not only your character, but also the public interests.

The nature of your inquiries on this subject, leads me to assure you, that I am not conversant in the secrets of foreign ministers, and that I cannot say whether Mr. Hammond was, or was not "particularly instructed," to communicate M. Fauchet's letter to the President. No such instruction was communicated to me. I am, sir, your obedient servant.

On the same day with the preceding to Wolcott, Mr.

Randolph wrote to the President, that his defence was only delayed by waiting permission to publish his letter of the 22d July, and his "consent that the whole of the affair, however confidential and delicate, be exhibited to the world." This letter did not immediately reach the President, having crossed him on his route to Philadelphia; but on the 10th, and before it could in any event have been received, Mr. Randolph published an extract from it in the Philadelphia Gazette, accompanied by the following note to the editor.

"Sir, the letter from which the enclosed is an extract, relates principally to the requisition of a particular paper. My only view at present is, to show my fellow citizens what is the state of my vindication."

This object could doubtless have been accomplished, if it had been the only one, in a more direct and candid manner, but amidst so much that is worse, this is of little importance. On the 21st, Washington wrote that he had received his letter but the day before, and in reply, to use his own words, gave him "full liberty to publish any, and every private and confidential letter he had ever written him; nay more, every word he ever uttered to him, or in his presence, from whence he could derive any advantage in his vindication."[a]

FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

New York, October 3, 1795.

I have received your letter, and thank you for the information. As to Randolph I shall be surprised at nothing, but if the facts come out, his personal influence is at all events damned. No colouring will remove unfavourable impressions. To do mischief he must work in the dark.

What you say respecting your own department disquiets me, for I think we shall for the present weather all storms but those from real deficiencies in our public engagements. Not knowing details, I can suggest nothing, except this general observation, that if the means heretofore provided, are seriously likely to

[a] Sparks' Writings of Washington, XI. p. 85

prove inadequate, Congress ought to be told so, in order to a further provision. It was a maxim in my mind, executive arrangements should not fail for want of a full disclosure to the legislature. Then if adequate provision be not made the responsibility is theirs. The worst evil we can struggle with is, inefficiency in the measures of government.

If I remember right, it never appeared that Fauchet had any power to make a commercial treaty with us, and the late Attorney General (Bradford) informed me that Adet had power only to *treat*, none to *conclude*. How are those things? I ask for special reasons.

What is the object of the despatch boat from France? Nothing menacing I hope. Mrs. Hamilton joins me in affectionate compliments to Mrs. Wolcott. Adieu, yours, with esteem,

A. HAMILTON.

The subject of British claims, provided for in the new treaty, which afterwards became a matter of serious difference between the two countries, came up incidentally this summer, and will be found treated in the two following letters.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, October 6, 1795.

I will in a few days inform you of the facts upon which my former letter was predicated.

The enclosed case of the Betsey, Capt. Furlong, excites much alarm here, and I think with reason. The same principles will extirpate nine-tenths of our claims for spoliations, and lead to new assaults upon our commerce.

I wish to know your opinion of the mode of proceeding under the 7th article of our treaty with England. Must all cases go through a process of litigation before the English courts, before they are submitted to commissioners? If so, for what purpose? Is the legality or illegality, the regularity or irregularity of a capture, to be determined solely in those courts, or will the commissioners take up claims *de novo*? This is an interesting question, for there is now little doubt but that the commissioners of appeals will affirm most of the judgments of condemnation.

My doubt on this subject principally arises from finding that the 6th article provides for the British debts, in the same manner as the 7th provides for the spoliation cases, and moreover defines the cases to be those where relief cannot be had in the ordinary course of judicial proceedings. Now it appears to me that it would be a very dilatory, expensive and unnecessary process, to compel an Englishman to travel through our courts, merely to ascertain that they could not do him justice, and to prepare his case for the commissioners. The same objections exist against a similar operation in the British Courts of Admiralty. Is it not

therefore the meaning of the treaty, that the commissioners shall settle both descriptions of claims and award compensation, according to principles of equity? And if this is the case, why is Mr. Bayard trying questions which are decided against him at an expense, which he estimates may amount to £75,000 sterling?

I must own I do not see through this business, and though you may think it strange, I beg you to remember that I knew nothing concerning the treaty till lately, and cannot devote much time to it without sacrificing objects more immediately in the line of my duty.

The fact is that the old doctrines of inalienable allegiance, and that neutrals may not in time of war carry on a commerce inhibited in time of peace; also the new doctrine that places can be blockaded by proclamation, are to be adduced against the United States, and from present appearances they will govern the courts of admiralty. The effect which these principles will have, I need not state to you. If all this subject cannot be taken up by commissioners and compromised equitably, the discussion of the claims will work infinite mischief. I wish therefore to see some way in which Mr. Bayard's agency at the British *Courts* might be arrested.

M. Fauchet made no overtures relative to a treaty of any kind. M. Adet says he is authorized to digest a new treaty of commerce and a new consular convention, but not to *conclude*. Mr. Randolph agreed to meet him on this ground, but nothing has been done that I know of.

I know nothing of despatches. The French minister is reserved; he thinks more than he expresses, and his expressions breathe something of dissatisfaction. We are I think in no very good way, but must make the best of circumstances.

What you say of efficiency is true; but there are no materials to be efficient with. Col. Pickering and myself are perfectly agreed, and he is as firm, industrious and intelligent, as any body could wish. There is, however, a mass of business, and few of that class of men in the public service who understand details, and endeavour to keep things in order. Even our able clerks cannot be retained; several have actually gone.

## FROM TIMOTHY PICKERING.

October 6th, 1795.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Taylor informs me that M. Fauchet never to his knowledge made even any *overtures* relative to a treaty of any kind. I have cast my eye over those of M. Adet, by which it appears that he is authorized to "digest" with the American government a new treaty of commerce and a new consular convention; but not to *conclude* any thing. Mr. Randolph agreed to meet him on this ground. If the articles digested should meet the approbation of the respective governments, they might give full powers to constitute of those articles the proposed new treaties. Sincerely yours,

T. PICKERING.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., Oct. 13th, 1795.

* * * *

Mr. Randolph's affair must have an odd complexion with the public. As he is in the shade, I have felt it to be my duty not to anticipate his vindication by any censures. But I may say to you in confidence, that I consider him as a lost and desperate man, who will endeavour to effect all the mischief possible.

As his situation has been of the most confidential kind, he will be able to reveal every weakness, error or inconsistency of the government, and thus impair confidence and excite faction. You know the world and characters too well not to be sensible that many things depend for their reputation upon secrecy. It ought to be sufficient that affairs go on well, and are finally settled right. The bad logic which has produced a true result need not be exposed.

Mr. R., I have no doubt has been unfaithful to the government, and has actually made treasonable or corrupt overtures to the late French Minister. The stories which are circulating are not true, but it is hard to say that the truth is not as much to his disadvantage. Goodrich may inform you more than I can commit to paper. R's. plan will be to raise a cloud about the treaty, &c, under an expectation that he can hide himself behind it. I hope that the truth will come out; indeed it shall be told by me if any false statements are made on his part.

I regret this affair exceedingly, as I see that it will excite the people and may possibly take a turn injurious to the true interests of the country. At any rate it will prove a test of patriotism and discernment, and we shall know what we are to expect.

Some important changes in the cabinet became necessary in consequence of Mr. Randolph's resignation. The office of Secretary of State was at first offered to PATRICK HENRY. Of him Marshall says: "He had led the opposition to the constitution in Virginia, but after its adoption, his hostility had in some measure subsided. He was truly the personal friend of the President and had lately manifested a temper not inimical to the administration." The offer of so responsible an office to a person who occupied this, at best neutral position, was a new proof of the impartiality of the President in his selection of officers, and the tone of the letter in which it was conveyed, is alone sufficient to refute the calumnies heaped upon the chief magistrate. "My ardent desire is," he said, "and my

aim has been (as far as depended upon the executive department) to comply strictly with all our foreign and domestic engagements; but to keep the United States free from political connections with every other country; to see them independent of all, and under the influence of none. In a word I want an American character; that the powers of Europe may be convinced we act for ourselves and not for others." Patrick Henry was however prevented by private considerations from occupying this office.[a] It was likewise offered to Mr. Patterson, Mr. King, Gen. C. C. Pinckney and Mr. Thomas Johnson of Maryland. In the interim the duties were performed by Col. Pickering.

Mr. Bradford, the Attorney General, who had died in August, was replaced by CHARLES LEE, of Virginia.

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In order to preserve the connection of the foregoing narration, one occurrence has been passed over which now requires notice.

Among the many personal attacks upon Washington which came forth from time to time, was an article in the Aurora, signed "A Calm Observer," which appeared towards the end of October. The paper was addressed indeed to the Secretary of the Treasury, but was levelled at the President himself, whom it charged with having constantly overdrawn his salary, Hamilton and Wolcott being implicated as conniving at the fraud in violation of the laws and of their oaths. The charge was supported by statements specifying the times at which, as was averred, the overdrafts had taken place, and conveying the idea that they were now serious in amount. The "Calm Observer" thus concluded his malignant and despicable libel:

[a] Vide V. Marsh, 541, *note*.

"What will posterity say to the man who has acted in the manner I have stated, after having thus solemnly addressed the legislature of his country: 'When I was first honored with a call into the service of my country, then on the eve of an arduous struggle for its liberties, the light in which I contemplated my duty, required that I should renounce every pecuniary compensation. From this resolution I have in no instance departed; and being still under the impressions which produced it, I must decline, as inapplicable to myself, any share in the personal emoluments which may be indispensably included in a permanent salary, and must accordingly pray that the pecuniary estimates for the station in which I am placed, may, during my continuance in it, be limited to such actual expenditures as the public good may be thought to require.' WILL NOT THE WORLD BE LED TO CONCLUDE THAT THE MASK OF POLITICAL HYPOCRISY HAS BEEN ALIKE WORN BY A CÆSAR, A CROMWELL, AND A WASHINGTON?"

Congress had annually appropriated the sum of $25,000 for the President's salary, which, by the act of Sept. 24th, 1789, was fixed at that sum, payable quarterly out of the treasury. Now it so happened that the President, in accordance with his expressed intention, had never personally drawn any monies from the treasury; but his private Secretary, as they were from time to time wanted, drew the amount required. The sums thus advanced had never exceeded the sums previously appropriated by law, though they had sometimes exceeded, as they sometimes fell short of the sums actually due for past services; but the treasury had never been in advance for the President at any time to the amount of a quarter's salary, and on the first day of the month in which the attack appeared, there was actually due him over $800 beyond the advances made. The whole basis on which the attack was made, was fictitious, and the question simply resolved itself into this, viz: whether it was lawful to an-

ticipate the whole or any part of the salary of the quarter. The same practice existed, and necessarily, in other matters, especially in the payment of members of Congress, where a gross sum was at once paid to the Speaker to be disbursed from time to time, and for which he was afterwards to account. The sums thus advanced, with the times of the advances, had been always rendered to Congress and printed with the annual accounts of the treasury; thus the practice was public, and its legality had never been doubted.

The day after the appearance of this attack, Wolcott addressed the following letter:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA.

PHILADELPHIA, October 24.

Mr. Bache,

I have read in your paper of the 23d instant, an indecent invective addressed to me, under the signature of "A Calm Observer," the object of which is to impress an opinion on the public mind that the President has received from the treasury greater sums than were authorized by law. As connected with the main design of calumniating the Executive, the writer has, however, adduced against my predecessor and myself, the serious charges—of having violated the constitution of the United States by issuing monies for which there was no appropriation—of having violated the law establishing the treasury department which directs that no warrants on the Treasurer shall be signed by the Secretary or countersigned by the Comptroller unless pursuant to some appropriation—of having violated the oath prescribed for the officers of the treasury.

In respect to the President, it is proper to say that it has been well understood at the treasury, that the monies appropriated for his compensation were applied solely to defray the expenses of his household, of which a regular account has been kept by his private Secretary. The advances from the treasury have heretofore been uniformly made on the application, and in the name of some one of the private secretaries, except in a single instance, lately, when the present Secretary was absent. The special order of the President for monies to defray the current expenses of his household has never been deemed necessary.

If, therefore, there has been an error in advancing monies, the President is not responsible for it; he is merely accountable in a pecuniary view for the act of his agent; as a matter affecting personal character he is in no manner concerned.

The responsibility for whatever is complained of by the "Calm Observer," therefore rests entirely upon the treasury department, and I readily assume it to myself. At the same time, I affirm, notwithstanding what is asserted to the contrary, that not one dollar has been advanced at any time for which there was

not an existing appropriation by law; and it is my belief, that nothing in the least degree contrary to law has been practised in respect to the time and manner of making the advances.

Candid men will believe this to be a sincere declaration when they are told that the course of conduct which is now censured has prevailed ever since the treasury department was established, and that the accounts which exhibit the evidence of this conduct have been regularly laid before Congress, and have been printed and disseminated throughout the United States. It is not credible that the officers of the treasury have knowingly violated the law, and at the same time have published the evidence of their guilt.

Mr. Bache, such has been the virulence of the attacks in your paper against public measures and the characters of men, who, until they held public appointments, were thought to deserve the confidence of their fellow-citizens, that I believe a common opinion prevails that some decisive explanation is necessary; that it is time it was known whether the public officers deserve all, or any part of the abuse which you publish; or whether there exists a confederacy whose nefarious object it is, by calumny and misrepresentations, to induce the people to believe that those who manage their public concerns are utterly destitute of integrity. I accede to this opinion—I invite the explanation as it respects myself—I wish that it may embrace the accusers of government—I await the consequences of the charges which you have published, that I have violated the constitution and laws of my country, and the oath of office which I have taken. I shall not avoid an investigation of my public conduct, and hope not long to regret that slander can be published in your paper with impunity.

To this an abusive rejoinder was made, terming it an evasion. Wolcott's assumption of the responsibility was rejected, and the writer renewed his attack upon the President who was evidently his real mark. The charge of evasion the Secretary repudiated in a brief note, averring that the estimates presented to Congress, and which they had sanctioned by appropriations, contained specific sums for the compensation of the President which had at no time been exceeded. Here, although the attack was continued, he would have left the matter, but Mr. Hamilton seeing that a good opportunity was afforded by exposing this, to crush the other slanders upon the President and the party, and desirous of vindicating the correctness of his conduct, had already determined to reply to the original article in his own name. He thereupon wrote to Wolcott requesting copies of the official papers

requisite to refute the statement. They were at once forwarded, and he published a defence, which, demonstrating the falsehood of the anonymous writer and the legality of the advances really made, silenced alike clamor and suspicion.

### FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

New York, Oct. 26th, 1795.

Dear Sir,

I have observed in the Aurora, a piece under the signature of "a Calm Observer," which I think merits attention. It is my design to reply to it with my name, but for this I wish to be furnished as soon as possible, with the accounts of the President, and of the appropriation for him as it stands in the Secretary's office, the Comptroller's, and the account rendered to Congress, and also the account of appropriations for this object. Of one point I am sure, that we never exceeded the appropriations, though we may have anticipated the service. Add any remarks you may judge useful. The sooner the better.

New York, October 27, 1795.

Dear Sir,

I wish the statement requested in my letter of yesterday, may contain each particular payment, not aggregate for periods. It runs in my mind that once, there being no appropriation, I procured an informal advance for the President from the Bank; if this is so let me know the time and particulars. If the account has been wound up to an exact adjustment since the period noticed by the Calm Observer, it may be useful to carry it down to that period. I should like to have a note of other instances of advances on account of salaries. Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

### TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Phil., Oct. 29, 1795.

I send you abstracts of all the payments to the President to the present time. It is a fact, that more money has been at times advanced than was due for service, but never a dollar for which there was no appropriation.

The villainy of the suggestion against the President, has induced me to reply to the Calm Observer on the 26th and 28th. You will see what I have said, and the enclosed papers will enable you to add anything which you think proper. I have not time to-day to ascertain whether any advance by the bank was ever granted. You know that the compensation to both houses of Congress had been paid in advance frequently.

FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

New York, Oct. 30, 1795.

Dear Sir,

I wrote you yesterday for a statement of the advances and appropriations for the Department of State. I am very anxious that *Fauchet's* whole letter should appear just as it is. Strange whispers are in circulation of a nature foreign to truth, and implicating honest men with rascals. Is it to come out? Can't you send me a copy? I will observe any conditions you may annex.

The secret journals and other files of the Department of State, will disclose the following facts—that during the war a Commission to negotiate a Treaty of Commerce with Great Britain, was given to Mr. Adams and afterwards revoked; that our Commissioners for making peace were instructed to take no step whatever, without a previous consultation with the French Ministry, though there was at the time, reason to believe that France wished us to make peace or treat with Great Britain without an acknowledgement of our independence; that she favoured a sacrifice to Spain of our pretensions to the navigation of the Mississippi, and a relinquishment of a participation in the fisheries.

It will appear that instructions were actually given to Mr. Jay, to yield the navigation of the Mississippi to Spain, in consideration of an acknowledgement of our independence; that Mr. Jay made a proposal accordingly, but clogged it with some condition or qualification to bring back to Congress, before a final conclusion and expostulation with Congress against the measure.

It will appear that this was affected by a southern party, who would also have excluded the fisheries from being an ultimatum, in which they were opposed by the North, who equally contended for the Mississippi and fisheries.

It will appear that Chancellor Livingston as Secretary of State, reported a censure upon our Commissioners for breaking their instructions in the negotiation for peace.

It will appear that shortly after the arrival in this country of the preliminary articles, I made a motion in Congress to renew the commission to negotiate a treaty of Congress with Great Britain—that a committee was appointed to prepare one with instructions, of which Mr. Madison was one, and that the committee never reported. Thus stand the facts in my memory. It is very desirable, now that a free access to the files of the Department can give the evidence, to examine them accurately, noting times, places, circumstances, actors, &c. I want this very much for a public use, in my opinion essential. It would also be useful to have a copy of Mr. Jefferson's letter to Congress concerning the transfer of the French debt to private money-lenders, on which the Report of the Board of the Treasury was founded. Yours truly,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S. Nov. 12. This letter by accident, has lain in my desk since it was written. I send it still.

Bache's paper of the 11th has a "Valerius" which I think gives an opportunity of oversetting him. The leading ideas may be,

1st. He discloses the object of the party to place Mr. Jefferson in contrast with the President.

2. He discloses the further object—an intimate and close alliance with France, subjecting us to the vortex of European politics—and attributes it to Mr. Jefferson.

3. He misrepresents totally, Mr. Jefferson's returning from France.

A solid answer to the paper with facts, would do great good.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov 2d, 1795.

I enclose a statement of the President's account quarterly, which shows that he has not been in advance *a quarter's salary* at any time.

You will see that the Aurora denies that the members of Congress have ever received monies which were not earned, and refers to a letter of mine to prove the fact. I never wrote a letter on the subject except to the Speakers, Muhlenberg and Trumbull, in answer to an application from them on this point: "Whether any advances that had been made to members of the House of Representatives beyond their real pay, had been afterwards accounted for in their subsequent accounts in a succeeding session?"

To this I answered to the following effect:

"It is certain that the Speakers of the House have in no instance, advanced monies beyond the compensation claimed by the members as actually due. Of course it does not appear to have been designed in any case, that monies advanced in one session, should be accounted for by services to be rendered in another.

"In the accounts of the 2d session of the 1st Congress, two errors were discovered of six dollars each, and one other of eighty-four dollars, which sums were overpaid in consequence of miscalculations. These sums were audited by the members who received the monies in the succeeding session, in consequence of notes which were placed in the pay-books, by the clerks who made the examination.

"A few other errors of a trivial nature, have at different times been noted as errors by the clerks, but whether they have been explained by the members, or accounted for, does not appear from the pay-books. The foregoing three cases are all that I can find which fall within the inquiries contained in your letter."

The plain meaning of my letter is, that it was not the practice to advance *during a session* more than was earned *in that session*. Further, I never meant, or examined the books to ascertain. I shall do it now. The reference to this letter proves, either that Muhlenberg is party to this business, or what is more likely, that my letter was lodged in the clerk's office, and that Beckley and Randolph are the authors of this attack. Nothing to the purpose can be gained from the accounts of the Secretary of the State, but you will find them enclosed.

FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Litchfield, Nov. 9th, 1795.

Sir,

* * * * The last session of our Legislature was perfectly tranquil. No apparent faction exists in the State. But few of the late incendiaries are elected. This State is very well disposed to support the national government, and holds in great contempt those who wish to disturb it. The name of a democrat is despised. The conduct of Boston has made, as I am told, but very little impression upon Massachusetts. Its folly has only excited a mobbish disposition in that town, by which the peace of it is frequently disturbed.

The conduct of Mr. Randolph makes a part of the conversation with almost all with whom I associate. As the public has no official account of his conduct, probably therefore many things are said of him which are not true; but it is observed, that more than two months have elapsed since his character has been publicly branded with infamy, and that he has taken no step to vindicate it, except by publishing a couple of mysterious, or rather as they are considered, insidious letters to the President, by which it is supposed he wishes to implicate his character with his own; but this attempt will be in vain; it can convey nothing but the evidence of his own folly, ingratitude and wickedness. Mr. Randolph's long silence must be construed into an evidence of his guilt, and indeed this is what I do not find that any one doubts. A full disclosure of this mysterious business will, I trust, develope a plan, which I doubt not has been long since laid, to throw this country into the utmost disorder. Happy will it be, shall it utterly disgrace those vile men, and fully check the intended mischief. But I fear we have but little reason to flatter ourselves with a durable tranquillity. We have fondly believed that mankind were wiser and better than they were in former ages, but of this, I believe we have no certain evidence. We are making experiments, but they will probably terminate as others have done.

I find that you are officially attacked, which I but very little regret, as I have the most undoubted confidence you will be able to vindicate yourself, and as you are implicated with the most respectable company. The President is the object which all these people aim their shafts at, hoping that if they cannot affect the public confidence, which I plight myself they never can, that they shall be able to induce him to resign, by giving him constant disturbance. This I devoutly hope will not be the case. It would be an event which every friend to order and good government would deprecate in the extreme. Can Mr. Randolph be the "Calm Observer?" If so, he is fallen, indeed, and no one will enquire whether he is most to be despised for his folly or his baseness. The next Congress will, I think, exhibit a noisy scene, and the turpitude of a Machiavelian policy.

France is attempting a political settlement. If she succeeds, which I believe is doubtful, it will be but of short duration. * * * *

I am, &c.,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

NEW YORK, Nov. 15, 1795.

Dear Sir,

At length I am able to send you the explanation I mentioned to you. The papers upon which it is founded are returned, that you may compare, and if necessary, correct. You may, by altering the body or by a note, rectify any inaccuracy.

You will observe marks in the margin which will require particular attention. (A) Let the distance, if not so now, be rightly stated. (B) Insert the most usual sum or sums. I think it was 10,000 to Senate, 20,000 to House of Representatives. (C) If you think it best, you may leave out here and afterwards, all that concerns the instruction referring the commencement of the compensation to the 4th of March, 1789. I think in this respect something will depend on the question whether the Treasury has finally taken its ground, and even then a *note* at foot, as after closing the letter, may be considered instead of striking out. Do as you please on this point. (F) Examine the calculation that gives this balance.

I will thank you to have a proof sheet brought you. You observe the quarterly statement is to be subjoined. Will it not be best that the Register should sign it? Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 16, 1795.

[Private.]

I sent you, on Saturday, an imperfect translation of Fauchet's letter. I now send you a copy of the original. You may, at your discretion, use the letter, except causing copies to be taken, or suffering it to be printed. Mr. Randolph has extensively circulated a letter in which he attributes his disgrace to the artifices of a "British faction." His letter is accompanied with an explanatory certificate from Fauchet, written at Newport, which I have not seen. I am told, however, by persons who have seen it, that it is a weak, evasive performance, and only makes bad worse. When the affair was opened to Randolph, he denied having received money or having made any proposition relative to money except on one occasion, which was this. He said that in the summer of 1794, Fauchet told him that there was a meeting of persons in New York, consisting among others, of Mr. Hammond and Mr. Jaudenes, who were conspiring to destroy him (R.) and Gov. Clinton. Being asked what he meant by destroying him and Governor Clinton, Randolph answered, to destroy his character as Secretary of State, and Gov. Clinton's as Governor of New York. Randolph said that he then inquired whether proof could be got of this conspiracy, and that after some conversation he suggested to M. Fauchet that, as he (F.) had the resources of the French government at command, he

could obtain the proof. This foolish story could make no impression, and though Mr. Randolph promised to reduce it to writing, he omitted to do so. There are reports in circulation, I find, which change the complexion of this first declaration of Randolph's, and represent the conspiracy as one to ruin France. I also suspect that attempts will be made to represent you as concerned in it; but of this I am not certain. At any rate, the whole is idle nonsense, and Fauchet's attempt by a posterior act to invalidate the evidence of a confidential letter will not succeed. What must have been the footing of these men when they could familiarly talk about the subversion of the government, and inviting the French to aid the insurrection with money.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., Nov. 19, 1795.

Mr. Randolph's conduct has lately been so extraordinary, that I consider myself perfectly at liberty to publish his affair. The fact as stated in the papers, of the intercepted letter being given to me by Mr. Hammond, is true, but the letter was delivered at my special request on being informed of its contents. Indeed, prudence no less than duty forbade the idea of secrecy on my part. The letter was shown by me to the Secretary of War and Attorney General, and they concurred in opinion that it ought to be delivered to the President, immediately on his return from Mt. Vernon.

The letter was written about the last of October, 1794, and is a most secret and confidential document, so secret indeed, that its contents were not divulged to M. Fauchet's associates in the diplomatic commission, who are now known to have been M. La Forest and M. Petry, and who ostensibly bore other characters. M. La Forest that of Consul General, and M. Petry, that of consul for Pennsylvania. This letter refers to other despatches, which are said to be narratives of occurrences—this is the *key* to those narratives. It states that the insurrection last summer, though ostensibly originating from the excise, was but a part of a more general explosion which had been long fermenting in the public mind. The origin is referred to the parties which were produced by the establishment of the government, and more particularly to the discontents created by the provision for the public debts.

There is a long story describing the parties, in which they are characterized according to the Virginia theory. The friends of the general government are "favourers of monarchy and aristocracy," with Hamilton at their head: the enemies of the government are patriots and republicans in name and principle. It is said that in 1793 and 1794, the attacks upon the general government had become so serious that its friends became alarmed, and that the government foreseeing a general storm, hastened the local insurrection to create a division, and that this was ascertained by the confession of Mr. Randolph to M. Fauchet. Randolph moreover is stated to have said that it was intended to introduce arbitrary power, and to mislead the President into paths that would conduct him to unpopularity. It is also said that the insurgents expected the assistance of lead-

ing men in the east, and that they believed that they had in the bosom of the government abettors, who either shared their grievances, or were of the same principles with themselves.

The raising of an army of 15,000 men, is however represented as unnecessary for the special object of reducing the insurgents, and as having been undertaken for the purpose of giving an imposing authority to the government. After the raising an army had been determined, it is said to have been necessary for the government to obtain the coöperation of certain men of influence with the "patriotic" party, whose inertness or indifference might have defeated the success of the plan which had been adopted. On this subject there are the following emphatic declarations:

[Here follow the extracts from No. 10, already cited.]

The corruption of the government is there directly attributed to Col. Hamilton's system of finance, which is said to have converted the people into stock jobbers, brokers and usurers. My remark however, upon this reasoning is, that it must be an odd system which corrupts only its enemies. If the villainy of the conspirators can be attributed to Col. Hamilton, who is constantly the subject of their attacks, he must indeed be a magician.

It appears from Fauchet's letter that the overtures of Randolph, which could be no other than to invite the coöperation of the French government with the insurgents, were rejected; and then, Fauchet says, the leaders of opposition "gave themselves up with scandalous ostentation to the views of government, and even seconded its proclamation."

It would require more time than I can spare, to comment upon the whole letter, which is very lengthy, but its complexion is mortifying and debasing in the utmost degree; the people are reproached as divided between two parties, and though the "patriots" are deemed the best republicans, they are the most corrupt. The "aristocrats" are said to have the most ability, but at the same time they are represented as favouring monarchy and aristocracy. Monroe is said to be a sound "patriot and an honest man," and strange to tell, the French government are referred to him as a voucher for what is said to our disadvantage; the words are "consult Monroe, he is an honest man, he cautioned me against characters," &c. Thus it seems our Secretary of State has been notoriously corrupt and unfaithful, the character of the country is stigmatized, and M. Fauchet appeals to our minister to confirm his calumnies!! I shall blush for my country, I shall despair of it, if the discovery of such treasons does not dissipate the delusion, which has nearly proved fatal to its dearest interests.

The time and manner of making these facts known is not settled. Mr. Randolph wishes for an opportunity to explain his conduct. This was granted; he has however, employed his time in traducing the characters of others. A letter has been circulated privately through the country, with some exculpatory certificate from Fauchet. I have not been able to see it, but from information on which I rely, it is but a lame and weak story, and it cannot answer the purpose of effacing a belief, that what Fauchet wrote confidentially to his own government must be the truth.

Randolph's situation is desperate; he will do mischief as much as is in his power; his aim is to have it believed that he has been disgraced by a "British Faction," and he will connect the discontents respecting the treaty and popular prejudices, as much as possible with his vindication. He will moreover reveal every secret and opinion that has ever been given; nay more, he will lie without reserve. Good and evil will result from the disclosure which is now unavoidable. On our external affairs and character, the influence will be unpropitious; as respects our country, much discussion and fermentation may be expected, as the views of the opposition will be revealed. As respects the personal character of those who have supported public measures, nothing bad is to be expected. There has I believe been perfect integrity, so far as those called "aristocrats" have been concerned.

I am well satisfied that the "Calm Observer" is a joint work of certain patriots. Randolph was doubtless an adviser, and Beckley, Clerk of the House of Representatives, the writer. I think I cannot be mistaken. What has been done by the treasury will, however, bear the strictest criticism, or I am much deceived.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, Nov. 23d, 1795.

Sir,

* * * Many stories have been circulating respecting the conduct of Mr Randolph, some of them not much different from what you have mentiontioned, but I was very glad to receive the information from a source which might be depended upon.

Mr. Randolph will not, I believe, wish to publish his vindication till the moment Congress shall meet; his official situation must probably enable him to communicate some anecdotes, by which, from their novelty, he will hope to direct the public attention from himself, and perhaps be able to prove, what no protestant ever doubted, that infallibility is not the portion of humanity. But his attempts to injure the reputation of the President, which I suppose are to be expected, will only betray his ingratitude and baseness. I have the most entire confidence that he never will be able to prove any intentional wrong, and the public have too long felt their own honour interested in that of the President, (and have felt such a national pride on that account) as not to feel a deep resentment at the man who shall unjustly attempt to injure his character.

The times appear to me critical and interesting. I am apprehensive that no more than a strong minority in the House of Representatives, will appear to support the administration and the national character, but I hope we may rely upon the firmness of the Senate. The virtuous motives which have induced the treating with regard, men who avow and act upon principles inconsistent with the preservation of order, to influence them to a more just conduct, have been and will be ineffectual. I hope therefore, however disagreeable it may be to imply an error of judgment in the President in appointing Mr. Rutledge, that he will not be confirmed in his office. I wish too that another person of a more confi-

dential character than Mr. Monroe, may supply his place, and that we be an independent nation not in name only. The numerous diplomatic characters in this country, are but little other than spies and disturbers of the public peace. I have long since had no doubt that we had of our own people, a number of foreign pensioners, among whom are several printers. The extreme vehemence which exhibits itself cannot otherwise be accounted for. I think it behooves those in Congress to meet this turbulent and nefarious policy with the greatest intrepidity. If things go on as they have lately done, with that outrageous indignity and insult, they certainly have nothing to lose, and both moral principle and a regard for their honour, will prompt them to the most vigorous exertions to save their country from that abject debasement to which it seems to be precipitating. If the Virginians and their associates wish to enjoy Dutch liberty, let us talk to them in a firm and decided tone, and inform them of the conditions upon which the Union is to be preserved, and require them to be explicit, so as to know on what we are to depend.

Mr. Randolph it seems has secured a copy right, to what he calls his vindication. As a lawyer, he ought to know that treason is no new invention, and that he is therefore not entitled to the privilege which he claims. I hope that he will have his reward in the common justice of his country.

The public mind with us is much excited at the conduct of the vilifiers of the administration. Those malcontents, or rather vile and most insidious men, cannot count but upon a very feeble support in New England. Their views are execrated by every honest man. The attack made upon the President and your department, which seems to be a national dishonour, as it impeaches the first magistrate with the meanest peculation, will as it respects yourself end in fume. I trust no member of Congress will take up that business with a view to crimination. * * * * I am, &c.,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## The following letter gives certain points of information requested in Mr. Hamilton's, of October 30th.

### TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 1, 1795.

I have not been able to ascertain all the points upon which you requested me to write to you.

In February 1780, a committee reported a conference with the Minister of France, the substance of which was—That the King of Spain wished for an alliance with the United States, but that it was necessary that the United States should state the claims precisely.

That the Cabinet of Madrid construed the western rights of the U. States, to extend no further westward than the line of settlement permitted by the British proclamation of 1763.

That the United States had no right to navigate the Mississippi.

That the King of Spain would conquer Florida for himself.

And that the lands westward of the line of 1763, were proper subjects of conquest by Spain from Great Britain.

The French minister said, that his most Christian Majesty was united by ties of blood to the King of Spain, and to the United States by treaty and friendship, and that he would endeavour to conciliate the differences of opinion with liberality, &c.

There are many intimations in the French conferences, exhorting the United States to moderation in their claims. It was stated that France might not be able to obtain an explicit acknowledgment of independence; in which case the United States ought to consider whether a tacit acknowledgment ought not to be accepted.

There are intimations at several times, that Mr. Adams required positive instructions to prevent him from acting too inflexibly, &c., &c. (This is the idea, not the expression).

June 17th, 1781. Mr. Adams was instructed thus: "To make the most candid and confidential communications upon all subjects to the ministers of our generous ally, the King of France, to undertake nothing in the negociations for peace or truce, without their knowledge and concurrence, *and ultimately to govern yourself by their advice and opinion,* endeavouring in your whole conduct to make them sensible how much we rely upon his Majesty's influence, for effectual support in every thing that may be necessary to the present security or prosperity of the United States of America."

It is worthy of remark that the draft of instruction was communicated to the French Minister, and the words scored with a line underneath, inserted afterwards by way of amendment.

I send Chancellor Livingston's draft of a treaty with England. It furnishes good matter for testing the opinions of "Cato" by a rule of authority for himself. You will judge of the manner of using these hints, but perhaps under present circumstances, they ought only to be considered as information, from which to date facts and reason.

You will hear from me on other points when I can get time.

I lately requested a corrected translation of a document which I sent to you. I hope it reached you.

## TO WILLIAM ELLERY.

PHILA., Dec. 1795.

[Private.]

I transmit you a copy of Mr. Randolph's vindication, and take the liberty to request you to ascertain as soon as possible, whether M. Randolph was or was not for some time in a *private* conversation with M. Fauchet at Newport?

It has been stated to me in a manner which admits of but little doubt, that Mr. Randolph was in fact, closeted with M. Fauchet for the greatest part, or whole of one night. If this be true, you will much oblige me by obtaining an affidavit of the fact, from some creditable person. My motive for making this inquiry will be discovered from a perusal of Mr. R's. publication.

Mr. Randolph published his Vindication on the 28th of December. In this document first appeared the extracts from the despatches 3 and 6, so often alluded to in No. 10, and to which in fact, the latter was a sequel, and also M. Fauchet's certificate, which however, had been privately circulated by him previous to its publication. The papers Nos. 3 and 6, are sufficiently important to insert entire.

"Extract from Political Dispatch No. 3 of Joseph Fauchet, to the Minister of Foreign affairs.

Then the Secretary of State appeared to open himself without reserve. He imparted to me the intestine divisions which were rumbling in the United States. The idea of an approaching commotion affected him deeply. He hoped to prevent it by the ascendancy which he daily acquired over the mind of the President, who consulted him in all affairs, and to whom he told the truth which his colleagues disguised from him.

'The President of the United States,' says he, 'is the mortal enemy of England, and the friend of France. I can affirm it upon my honour. But not mixing with the world, he may be circumvented by the dark manœuvres of some men, who wind themselves in an hundred ways to draw him into measures which will cause him to lose all his popularity. Under the pretext of giving energy to government, they would absolutely make a monarch of him. They deceive him as to the true spirit of the people, as well as upon the affairs of France. I am sure that at this moment he escapes from them, and that in all these perfidious manœuvres they have not been able to dissuade him from pronouncing with vigor against the ministry of England. He has—but it is impossible for me in conscience to make you this confession. I should betray the duties of my office. Every thing which I can say to you is, that it is important for our two nations, that you continue to visit him frequently. He will be touched with the proofs of friendship which you shall testify to him, and I am sure this will be an infallible means of causing them to be valued. I would quit the post which he has confided to me if he could be brought to make any attempt upon the rights of the people. A bill has passed the House of Representatives which wounds liberty. They have at last taken away the Article which prevents the sale of the French prizes in our ports. My heart is troubled by it. But I have seen with pleasure, that my reflections on this subject, upon the dreadful crisis which would result from an abuse of it, have made a deep impression upon the mind, I will even say upon the heart of the President, who is an honorable man. Let us unite M. Fauchet, to draw our two nations closer together. Those who love liberty are for fraternizing with France; the partizans of slavery prefer an alliance with England.

'I affirm,' he said to me, (speaking of the treaty of Jay) 'that there is no question in his mission, but to demand a solemn reparation for the spoliations which our commerce has experienced on the part of England; and to give you a

proof that Mr. Jay cannot enter into a negociation contrary to what we owe to France, I will give you the part of the instructions which concern it.'" [a]

"Extract from Political Dispatch No. 6, of Citizen Fauchet, Minister plenipotentiary of the French Republic to the United States.

Scarce was the commotion known, when the Secretary of State came to my house. All his countenance was grief. He requested of me a private conversation. 'All is over,' he said to me. 'A civil war is about to ravage our unhappy country. Four men by their talents, their influence and their energy, may save it. But debtors of English merchants, they will be deprived of their liberty if they take the smallest step. COULD YOU LEND THEM, INSTANTANEOUSLY, FUNDS SUFFICIENT TO SHELTER THEM FROM ENGLISH PERSECUTION?' This enquiry astonished me much. It was impossible for me to make a satisfactory answer. You know my want of power, and my defect of pecuniary means. I shall draw myself from the affair by some common-place remarks, and by throwing myself on the pure and unalterable principles of the republic.

I have never since heard of propositions of this nature."

M. Fauchet in his certificate, attempted to explain away so much of all these dispatches as related to Randolph, but with little even of plausibility. *Litera scripta manet*, and there were statements to which, while they remained, but one construction could be given. The "precious confessions," he referred to the assurances of the President's friendship to France, and the communication, as he supposed without authority, of the extract from Jay's instructions. Many of the things which he had considered as "confidences" or "confessions," had also proved to be matters of public conversation, or might have been communicated by virtue of secret instructions. The sole explanation of the extraordinary "confidence" detailed in No. 3, is a paraphrase. The "overtures" reported in No. 6, of the meaning of which he seems to have had no doubt when he wrote, that "with some thousands of dollars, the republic could have decided on civil war or peace," that "the consciences of the pretended patriots of America already had their prices," when even

[a] The note containing these instructions is appended to the original, but is not important in reference to this matter, as it was given with the President's permission, and amounted simply to a statement of intended neutrality.

his virtuous indignation burst forth at their scandalous openness, assumed on more mature reflection an aspect innocent in his opinion.

The minister, it now seems, shortly after his arrival, had, on Mr. Randolph's recommendation, employed certain flour contractors. In some of their many conferences on the whiskey insurrection, M. Fauchet communicated intelligence he had procured, that the British were fomenting this resistance of the laws. Similar information of a conspiracy to destroy the popularity of General Clinton, and the influence of Randolph over the President, he had already given. On the occasion of that interview, Mr. Randolph professed his conviction of the truth of these reports. The conversation that occurred, according to this new version of it, is remarkable enough to quote entire.

"He demanded of me, if, as my republic was itself interested in these manœuvres, I could not, by the means of some correspondents, procure some information of what was passing. I answered him that I believed I could. He replied upon this, that having formed many connections by the means of flour contracts, three or four persons among the different contractors, might, by talents, energy and some influence, procure the necessary information, and save America from a civil war by proving that England interfered in the troubles of the west. I do not recollect that he gave to me at that time, any details upon the manner in which this discovery would produce this last effect; but I perfectly recollect to have heard it said by some person or other, that the insurgents would be abandoned by the greatest number of those whom they believed to be on their side, and that the militia would march with cheerfulness, if it could be proved that the English were at the bottom of these manœuvres. I think therefore, that this was probably the manner in which he conceived that things would probably be settled, and that he thought that the insurrection would cease from the want of support. At the moment of mounting his horse, he observed to me that the men whom I might be able to employ, might perhaps be debtors of English merchants; that in this case, they might perhaps be exposed on the slightest movement which they should make in this important affair, to see themselves harrassed by process and even arrested by the pursuits of their creditors. He asked me if the payment of the sums which were due to them by virtue of the existing contracts, would not be sufficiently early to render these individuals independent of British persecution. I confess that this proposition to obtain intelligence, surprised me. I was astonished that the government itself did not procure for itself information

so precious, and I made the reflections contained in my letter on this affair, because I believed and still do believe, that all the citizens in the United States ought to endeavor to furnish intelligence so important, without being stopped by the fear of British persecution, and because I moreover thought when I committed my reflections to paper, that it was proposed to obtain the intelligence by assisting with loans, those who had contracted with me ; but now calling to mind all the circumstances to which the questions of Mr. Randolph call my attention, I have an intimate conviction that I was mistaken in the propositions which I supposed to have been made to me." [a]

This account it must be admitted is an ingenious one, but it is hardly reconcileable with that of the despatch. The private interview, the hurried air, the agitation of the Secretary as he imparted his intelligence, the singular statement that four men could save the nation from civil war, the eager request of an instantaneous loan to preserve them from British vengeance as there described, is somewhat inconsistent with the now gradual and natural change of the conversation from the suspicion of British intrigue, to the means of preventing it. But even according to the latter story, the sagacity of Mr. Randolph in foreseeing that the very flour contractors who were to be employed, would be indebted to British merchants, is as remarkable as his humanity was commendable in protecting them from the possible consequences of so remote a contingency. Superficial men, had such an objection presented itself to their minds, or been afterwards ascertained to exist, would have looked elsewhere for assistants ; prejudiced men would suppose that had Mr. Randolph been seriously desirous of proving his suspicions, he would not have dropped the subject when M. Fauchet pleaded poverty, that he would have then sought men who did not need such advances, and ignorant persons will wonder with that gentleman, that he should resort at all to a foreign minister to do what was within his own province.

[a] For the whole certificate, see " Vindication," page 13, *et seq.*

There are other points unexplained and perhaps inexplicable. Why were not these flour contractors mentioned in the despatch? Was it they who, when it was found that the French Republic purchased no men to do their duty, gave themselves up with such scandalous ostentation to the views of the government? They, it appears from the despatch itself, knew nothing of their intended employment. Were they the pretended patriots whose consciences had already their prices? men who did not even know that they were offered for sale. Was it the payment of their contracts in advance, which made it necessary for the minister to throw himself on the pure and unalterable principles of his republic?

M. Fauchet avers in conclusion that no name or sum was mentioned to him, and that Mr. Randolph never directly or indirectly received money from him or made overtures therefor, and he says: "Further I solemnly declare, that from the time of my arrival, I have repeated when an opportunity presented itself and without doubt often in the presence of Mr. Randolph, that the morals of my nation and the candor of my government, severely forbid the use of money in any circumstances which could not be publicly avowed." [a]

There is something of sublimity in this declaration of M. Fauchet of the morals of his nation and the candor of his government, and it must be a matter of regret that the close of despatch No. 6, puts his refusal on different grounds; nor is the reason for so often repeating these asseverations, and that too in the presence of a Secretary of State, clearly intelligible. The "certificate" indeed was very unsatisfactory in exculpating Mr. Randolph. Its author was either strangely ignorant of what relations between himself and the Secretary of State were proper on the part of that officer, or he was content to leave his

[a] "Vindication," p. 16.

friend under the suspicions to which his intercepted despatch had subjected him, and the Secretary in his vindication appears to have been of this opinion. Mr. Randolph was equally unfortunate in his own share of the defence. A very large portion of his pamphlet was occupied with a history of the objections to the British treaty. In what manner the defects of that instrument or the President's unwillingness to ratify it, could excuse malconduct on his own part previous to its reception, is not explained; but he probably expected to strengthen a report industriously circulated by the opposition papers, that he was made the victim of a conspiracy for having dissuaded Washington from signing it. Every paragraph of No. 10 is separately commented upon, even when no reference is made to himself. It will, however, be sufficient for the present purpose to notice his remarks on what was pertinent to his defence.

In commenting upon the phrase "precious confessions," he says it "involves the judicious management of the office. It implies no deliberate impropriety, and cannot be particularly answered, until particular instances are cited, unless it be by resorting to M. Fauchet's own explanations," viz: those contained in the certificate which have been already mentioned, and which he avers to have been but proper conversations with that minister. That M. Fauchet was authorised to draw from any conversation with him, the conclusions to which he arrives from the interview as reported in No. 3, is expressly denied. "How was it possible," he says, "for me to infer from any acts of the government known to me, that it was hastening the local eruption? With the excise the department of state was not concerned; it belonged to the treasury, and was there managed, I believe, even to the issuing of process." The Secretary of State might nevertheless know of so very important a machination in that department; but further to show his innocence of this

charge, Mr. Randolph proves the actual magnitude of the insurrection, and states that he urged in consequence the augmentation of the army of suppression. As to the overtures of No. 6, he makes rather a different version from M. Fauchet. The probability that the insurgents were stimulated by the British is mentioned, and he avers that as that personage had often spoken of it, he merely called upon him to show the justice of his complaints by proving the facts. The flour contractors with whose *names* he had furnished the French minister, and "who were upon an intimate footing" with that gentleman, could obtain the requisite information, and if necessary, he could protect them by advances to be made on account of their contracts; a protection which would probably be important as, if the British were at the bottom of the insurrection, they would of course exercise every rigor against those engaged in an enquiry. Mr. Randolph further states, that on the very day of the conversation he communicated to the President M. Fauchet's complaints and his answer. As to his explanation at the cabinet meeting, he says, "How I expressed myself in relation to this, if at all, I cannot now remember, for it was so much an affair of accidental occurrence to my mind, that until I saw No. 6, I could not in the smallest degree satisfy myself how money came to be involved. M. Fauchet's letter indeed made me suppose that No. 6, possibly alluded to some actual or proffered loan or expenditure for the nourishment of the insurrection." In conclusion, reasons are urged against the probability of his having made corrupt overtures to the minister, adduced in part from the poverty of that functionary, officially known from his anxiety to anticipate the debt due to France for the purchase of provisions; in part from the fact that others were associated with him who were believed to be in friendly relations with federal members of the cabinet (!) and who must have been consulted as to advances of money; and, finally, because he had not

offered for sale official secrets, "the value of which would have been more attractive to him (Fauchet) than the 'saving of the United States from civil war.'"

The review of these documents has been extended in order that the whole merits of the subject might be exhibited fairly. So far as Mr. Randolph is concerned, it may be thus summed up. A letter containing statements derogatory to his official character had been put into Wolcott's hands by the British minister, and prudence as well as duty dictated the course pursued by the latter. The strictest secrecy was observed in reference to its contents by himself and those consulted. The letter at the earliest possible moment was laid before the President, and an opportunity was given to the Secretary of State, in presence of all the officers who were privy to its contents, to establish his innocence of its imputations. No charges were brought against him, an explanation was simply required. In this he failed, and on his own suggestion resigned his office. After a conference with the writer of that letter; after free and unreserved inspection of all documents necessary to his exculpation, had it depended upon documents; after months consumed in its preparation; he produced a labored defence. It was his own fault if, as Wolcott's father sarcastically observed, that defence proved to be, what he himself entitled it, a vindication, not of his conduct, but of his resignation. Had he confined himself in its pages to its proper issue, his own guilt or innocence, nothing further would have been required here, than a reference to the subject as a matter of history. But Mr. Randolph travelled out of the record and unsparingly attacked one whose agency in the transaction was a forced one. The examination of his own conduct has therefore been extended that we may see what credit is to be given to his attacks upon others.

It has been shown that much discrepancy exists between M. Fauchet's despatches and his certificate; that

even where the facts are admitted, by a change of statement and of *inducement*, a very different character is given to them, and that in passing through a second operation under Mr. Randolph's hands, a still further loss of their original character is suffered. Now it is evident that in preparing secret information for his government, the French minister had no motive in giving a false color to his statements, and that his recollection of circumstances and their relations, could not have been improved by the lapse of a twelvemonth; that on the contrary, when his private papers had been intercepted, and the confidential source of his communications exposed, he had a strong motive for shielding from disgrace the man whose personal and political connections with himself had been the cause of his danger, who was attacked by those whom he considered as his own enemies, and who was apparently ruined by his own imprudence. Mr. Randolph on his side, was a party interested, and would of course put his own conduct in the best light. Lastly, before the appearance of either certificate or vindication, the minister and secretary were closeted together at Newport, and a full opportunity obtained to arrange the mode of explanation. When, therefore, that explanation conflicts with direct and positive assertions in the original testimony of a then disinterested witness, the latter is certainly the most entitled to belief.

Laying aside for the moment the charge of corruption, there was even in the modified version of Mr. Randolph's "confidences," a total ignorance of, or dereliction from duty. They present the picture of a Secretary of State feeding the greedy ears of a foreign minister with tales of the factions and divisions of his country; maligning his associates in the cabinet as monarchists and enemies of liberty, accusing them of a design to subvert the republic; asserting the President to be the mortal enemy of one nation and the sincere friend of another with whom we were upon the same terms of peace; and pointing out the

means of winning favor with the executive by personal attentions. Had no other ground appeared against him, he merited for this, even upon his own showing, an ignominious discharge. But the actual guilt of Randolph, in making corrupt overtures of some kind to Fauchet, remains undisproved. The concerted story of the flour contractors was too transparent, the versions of it too inconsistent, to overthrow the original positive charge.

One word more as to his attacks on WOLCOTT. The vague and general charges of monarchism, British influence, conspiracy with Mr. Hammond, deserve no refutation. They savor too much of a spirit of blind retort to have weight with any one, unless supported, to borrow a phrase of Mr. Randolph's own, "by particular instances." The delay of producing the papers until the means of refuting their charges should be out of his reach, by the departure of Fauchet and Hammond, is not attributable to Wolcott, even if just. The letter was delivered by him to the President at the earliest possible moment, and the subsequent delay is moreover fully accounted for. Even after the communication was made to him, Randolph had leisure to spend twelve days in reaching Newport to see M. Fauchet. The complaint, too, that no exertion was made to obtain the despatches 3, and 6, is as respects Wolcott, unjust. It was decided by the President himself, for reasons which appear in his note to the secretaries, that such a request to Mr. Hammond or M. Adet was improper. Mr. Randolph, in his vindication, gave many reasons against the probability of his guilt. There was produced soon after his resignation, one in favor of the supposition. The investigation of his accounts conferred upon him the distinction of being the first cabinet officer who was a DEFAULTER. Had Mr. Jefferson communicated to the President the facts stated in his "Ana" respecting his successor, the latter might have been spared the opportunity of thus earning an immortality of shame.

# CHAPTER X.

## FOURTH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION.

THE following letter to the President, previous to the opening of the session, contains a general review of the condition of the finances, and the events already noticed:

### TO THE PRESIDENT.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, November 12, 1795.

The Secretary of the Treasury respectfully represents to the President of the United States, that the following are the principal occurrences in the treasury department since the first of January, 1795:

In relation to Domestic Loans obtained.

1st. A sum of eight hundred thousand dollars has been borrowed under the act of March 20th, 1794, making further provision for the intercourse between the United States and foreign nations, and the act of February 21st, 1795, in addition thereto. The rate of interest to be paid by the United States is 6 per centum per annum, payable quarter yearly, and the principal is to be refunded in four annual instalments of $200,000 each on the last days of December in the years 1796, 1797, 1798, and 1799.

The above mentioned loan was received of the Bank of the United States in six per cent. stock of the United States, and has been transmitted to John and Francis Baring & Co., of London, to be sold by them. Letters from Messrs. Barings have been lately received, stating that funds to the amount of £160,000 were held by them subject to the order of Col. Humphreys. Of this sum, the value of $40,000 has been remitted to Hamburgh, as is understood, pursuant to the directions of Col. Humphreys from Paris.

2d. Under the authority of the act passed March 3d, 1795, entitled "An act making further appropriations for the military and naval departments, and for the support of government," two loans have been obtained from the Bank of the United States for $500,000 each, bearing interest at six per centum, payable

half yearly on the 1st July and 1st January. The first loan bears interest from April 1st, 1795, and is repayable on the 1st of April, 1796, and the other bears interest from the 1st of October, 1795, and is repayable on the 1st of October, 1796. A sum of $1,000,000 has been also received on account of a loan made the last year.

In relation to Domestic Loans repaid.

1st. Repayments of former loans in anticipation of the revenue have been made during the year 1795, to the amount of $1,400,000.

2d. The third instalment of the loan of two millions of dollars, had of the Bank of the United States, has been paid pursuant to the act of January 8th, 1795, containing a provision for that purpose.

In relation to Foreign Loans.

Measures were seasonably taken by the treasury for reimbursing the instalment of one million of florins which became due in Amsterdam on the 1st day of June last. But owing to the operation of the war and the revolution in Holland, the measures which were adopted had not been successful in August last. As the delay has been produced by causes over which the United States could have no controul or influence, and as the interest has been punctually paid, the public credit is understood to have suffered no blemish.

In relation to the Foreign Debt.

The instalments of the debt due to the Republic of France, which, by contract, became payable in the present year, have been discharged at the treasury, amounting to $453,750. The remaining debt has been amicably adjusted, and finally settled in concert with an authorized agent of the French government, and the sum which appeared to be due from the United States, has been subscribed to the loan proposed by the second section of the act, entitled "An act making further provision for the support of public credit and for the redemption of the public debt." The pecuniary obligations of the United States to France, as subsisting under former contracts, may therefore be considered as discharged.

In pursuance of the act last recited, measures have been taken for ascertaining whether the remainder of the foreign debt can be reloaned with the consent of the creditors. Though the experiment has not been fully made, yet from what is already known there is reason to conclude that the situation of the contract, as proposed in the act of the last session, will not be chosen by the creditors. As unprecedented difficulties attend the fulfilment of the public engagements in Amsterdam and Antwerp at present; as the same difficulties will always be experienced, in a greater or less degree, during war in Europe; and as in proportion to their extent and operation, they must hazard the credit of the United States in foreign countries, it may be expedient for Congress to consider whether the important object of reloaning the foreign debt, cannot be accelerated by some modification of the proposal, at once inviting to the creditors, and at the same time consistent with the public interest. At present there is no provision

made by law for discharging the instalments of principal of the foreign debt, which are annually falling due, except from the proceeds of new loans; during the continuance of the war, there is no probability that foreign loans can be obtained on eligible terms. Besides, if this were not the case, Congress have by the act of the last session wisely manifested an indisposition to authorize a recurrence to this resource, except in cases of urgency. The authorities for obtaining monies on domestic loans, are at present subject by law to such conditions that doubts are entertained whether they contain an adequate resource against every exigency.

A general recommendation to Congress to consider whether some further provision for the foreign debt be not necessary, in case it shall not be reloaned, appears therefore to be expedient.

In relation to the Domestic Debt.

The redemption of the public debt being an object of the utmost importance to the happiness and security of the United States, it cannot be too urgently pressed upon Congress to consider whether the provisions in former laws are calculated to produce the desired effect. The points on which the law of the last session in particular, require alteration, can be suggested by the treasury, but a general reference to the subject by the President, is necessary to attract the attention of Congress.

* * * *

In relation to the Revenue.

The revenue from importations and the tonnage of vessels continues to be increasing. This fact, considering the embarrassments and heavy losses which the commerce of the country has suffered in consequence of the war, is at once a pleasing demonstration of the great resources of the United States, and of the virtue and patriotism of the mercantile community.

The Revenues from internal duties have not equalled the anticipations which were formed of their product. This has been owing to various causes. In respect to the duties on distilled spirits and on stills, it may be observed, that the want of the foreign materials, which were used before the war, and the new directions which have lately been given to the industry of the country, are causes sufficient to account for a considerable deficiency. In respect to the other objects subject to duty, the time has not yet been sufficient to organize the arrangements for the collection, and to receive information of the results from every quarter. Considerable inconvenience has moreover been experienced, from the want of authority to allow compensations adequate to the service of the officers. But notwithstanding the operation of all these causes, tending to prevent or postpone the receipt of monies into the treasury, still there is reason to believe that a considerable part of the deficiency is owing to the want of a system of collection sufficiently energetic and coercive. It remains with Congress to determine whether there be not some defects in the laws which require correction. The establishment of an effective and productive internal revenue is truly interesting, as connected with a speedy reduction of the public debt; and no period can be

more fit for the accomplishment of this object, than the present, when the internal resources of the country are flourishing in a degree hitherto unprecedented.

In relation to the purchase of supplies for the War Department.

The Purveyor of public supplies is an officer of the treasury, and he is moreover charged with the agency of superintending the purchases for the Frigates. By information from this officer and from other sources, it is ascertained that the public supplies cannot be certainly obtained except by means of systematical and permanent public arrangements. A time of war in Europe, and a state of neutrality on the part of the United States, however eligible in some respects, is not without its peculiar dangers and disadvantages. In such a state of things, all kinds of articles for military operations are liable to be suddenly withdrawn from the country, and are at the same time generally prohibited from being imported. The consequence is that the country is left without any considerable resources except what it may possess in public magazines; and the small supplies which remain in the market, are greatly enhanced in price by the competition of foreign agents.

The present state of this country in respect to military supplies, is such as forbids the idea of war, even if on other accounts it might reasonably be adjudged to be necessary. The only remedy against the dangers resulting from such a situation, obviously is a systematical provision for the purchase in time of peace, of all articles which cannot be manufactured here, especially such as are not liable to damage and waste. It is also presumed that a wise and provident policy would dictate the establishment of public foundries and manufactories for arms, to prevent the loss of skill in the fabrication of arms, which must degenerate in a state of peace. The experiments which have been made for obtaining cannon for the Frigates and Batteries, only evince that a skill which was common during a part of the late war, has deplorably declined. The Frigates which were ordered to be built in the year 1794, would however, have been in a state of considerable forwardness, had not unexpected difficulties attended the procuring of timber from Georgia. It is believed however, that these will soon be surmounted. It has not been possible to substitute the timber of this part of the country for that expected from Georgia, without a great loss of time, as the northern timber is said to require a long seasoning before it is fit for use.

As incidental to the business of the treasury, it is necessary to mention, that the execution of the laws is weakened by the want of adequate compensations to certain officers, especially to Marshals and District Attorneys. In some of the States these offices are a heavy burthen to the possessors; hence a want of zeal and frequent vacancies.

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The opposition were a majority in this as well as the late House of Representatives. Mr. JONATHAN DAYTON, of New Jersey, was chosen Speaker.

The speech of the President, delivered on the 8th of December, was prefaced by the remark that he had never met the national legislature at a period when more than then, the situation of public affairs afforded just cause for mutual congratulation. The intelligence it conveyed justified the observation. Besides the virtual conclusion of the British Treaty, now first officially announced, General Wayne had brought the north-western Indians to terms, which (liberal to them) promised a durable tranquility; the Creeks and Cherokees had again confirmed their previous treaties, although the frequent murders perpetrated by the whites, rendered their observance more doubtful; the Emperor of Morocco had recognized that made with his father; the agent sent to Algiers had adjusted the terms of peace with that power, and Mr. Pinckney had transmitted information that a prospect existed of a speedy conclusion of the negociations with Spain[a]. The internal tranquillity, the increasing population and prosperity of the Union at home, were likewise sources of patriotic satisfaction.

Among the suggestions to the consideration of Congress, a revisal of the military establishment and the militia system; the prevention of aggressions upon the Indians, and the public debt, were severally mentioned.

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH, TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec., 1795.

Sir,

We had an easy and agreeable journey, and on our arrival, the pleasure to find our friends in health, and since have become quite happily domesticated with them.

You will receive the President's speech through the medium of the press, earlier than I can transmit it. It was received with uncommon satisfaction by all the friends of the government, and we hope it will make these favourable im-

[a] The treaty with Spain was finally concluded in October. That with Algiers, negotiated in the month of September, by Mr. Donaldson, was in November signed by Col. Humphreys, the American Minister at Lisbon, who was empowered for that purpose.

pressions upon the public mind, the truths it contains really merit. Admitting the picture drawn in it of our prosperous condition to be a just delineation, and we trust it is too forcibly engraven on the minds of the great body of our citizens to be denied, little room is left for the complaint and acrimony we have witnessed these months past. A motion was brought forward in the House of Representatives by Mr. Parker of Virginia, not to return any written answer but by a committee to assure the President the House would take into consideration the important matters recommended to them, with all the attention they deserved. It received but a feeble support, and a committee consisting of Mr. Madison, Sedgwick and Sitgraves, is appointed to draft an answer, which probably will be placed on the table to-morrow. From the known attachment of the two latter to the administration of the government, we are certain it will contain nothing disrespectful of present measures. An opinion prevails that as the President has nicely avoided placing the treaty before the House, so as to call for an opinion on its merits, it is wise for us to follow his example. It is a subject entirely out of our province to decide on, and happily so, because the prospect is that we should decide in opposition to the other branches of the government. And although a motion may be brought forward to draw the merits of the treaty into discussion, it is hopeful we shall prevent any opinion being given. We also expect on its final ratification, we shall be able to obtain an act providing for its execution. The subject is really so circumstanced, that we can now say 'tis too early for us to give any opinion on its merits, and when it becomes the supreme law, 'tis too late for such an opinion.

I can't give you any further intelligence respecting Mr. Randolph. If he wraps his vindication in those mysteries and tergiversations which are the surest evidence of guilt, if the interests of our country have been put in hazard, I think we may now felicitate ourselves they are safe. Mary Anne joins me in affectionate remembrances to yourself and Frederic, with which I subscribe myself your ob't humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

The nominations of Mr. Pickering as Secretary of State, and Mr. Lee as Attorney General, were confirmed on the 10th. The vacant war office was offered to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina, Edward Carrington of Virginia, John Eager Howard of Maryland, and finally to JAMES MCHENRY, also of Maryland, who accepted it and was commissioned on the 27th January.

Wolcott's report to the House was communicated on the 14th December. The gross amounts of receipts and expenditures of the United States for the period commencing January 1st, and ending Sept. 30th, 1795, were as follows :

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|---|---|
| EXPENDITURES. | |
| Civil Department, | $286,958 29 |
| Military " | 2,059,636 34 |
| Naval " | 302,940 00 |
| Fortifications of ports and harbors, | 65,168 46 |
| Military pensions, | 67,637 22 |
| Annuities and grants, | 2,530 20 |
| Temporary Domestic Loans, | 1,400,000 00 |
| Interest on " " | 221,099 99 |
| Diplomatic Department, | 15,005 00 |
| Extra expenses of " | 897,680 12 |
| Third instalment of two millions loan, | 200,000 00 |
| Debts contracted by T. Pickering, | 61 59 |
| Interest on the domestic debt, | 1,782,084 38 |
| Support and erection of light houses, | 13,969 10 |
| Contingent expenses of government, | 9,983 98 |
| French debt, | 272,266 04 |
| Dutch debt, | 675,373 33 |
| Debt due to foreign officers, | 5,866 32 |
| Mint establishment, | 13,000 00 |
| Miscellaneous expenses, | 32,874 80 |
| Balance in Treasurer's hands Sept. 30th, 1795, deducting warrants issued, but unpaid, | 369,826 29 |
| | $8,693,961 45 |
| RECEIPTS. | |
| Balance in Treasurer's hands subject to warrants on the 1st of January, 1795, | $1,148,147 55 |
| Duties on imports and tonnage three quarters of a year, | 4,234,046 26 |
| Duties on spirits distilled in the United States during the same period, | 210,016 18 |
| Postage on letters, | 22,400 00 |
| Dividends on bank stock, | 160,000 00 |
| Fees on letters patent, | 510 00 |
| Domestic loans, | 2,800,000 00 |
| Bills of exchange, | 96,424 00 |
| Repayments of balances, | 18,865 53 |
| Balances due under old government, | 3,551 91 |
| | $8,693,961 45 |

The estimates exhibited at this time were afterwards modified by subsequent legislation, and are therefore omitted.

The subject of the temporary loans, one becoming of

serious importance, was brought to the attention of the house in this communication. The amounts outstanding in February preceeding, have been before stated; the additions since then, in consequence of laws passed at the last session, were, one of $800,000 obtained from the Bank of the United States under the act of 21st February already mentioned, and two of $500,000 each, obtained under the act "making appropriations for the military and naval service and the support of government," passed 30th March. These had been found necessary from the state of the treasury and the demands created by the expenses of the whiskey insurrection. In addition to them, it would be necessary to obtain on the 1st January coming, the further sum of $500,000, under the act "making provision for the support of public credit," in order to repay to the Bank of the United States the purchase money of the six per cent. stock obtained by Mr. Hamilton, for remittance to Holland. The gross amount of all the temporary loans would therefore, on the 1st January, 1796, be $6,200,000, of which there fell due during the year, payments to the amount of $800,000. There would also become payable on the Dutch debt, an instalment of $414,100.

The Bank of the United States, it should be remarked, from which six millions of the temporary loans had been obtained, became crippled by the loan of so large an amount of its capital to the government, and was impatient of repayment. The specific recommendations on the subject of these debts was contained in a report on the public debt made later in the session.

In regard to the coming year, the Secretary observed under this state of facts,

1st, That after making a liberal allowance for unforseen demands which might require appropriations, and for deficiencies, the revenue would be adequate to the annual reimbursements of the six per cent. stock, bearing a pre-

sent interest; to the payment on the interest on the foreign and domestic debt; and to the discharge of the sums estimated for the current service.

2d, That the anticipations of the revenue which might exist at the close of the year, must be continued for the year ensuing, and

3d, That the instalments of the foreign debt which would fall due in June, and certain instalments of domestic loans before mentioned, must be reloaned or satisfied out of the proceeds of new revenues.

In continuation, the attention of the house was directed to the act of the last session, "making further provision for the support of the public credit and the redemption of the public debt." The want of success which had hitherto attended the efforts to convert the foreign debt was thus explained;

"The objections against a mutation of the contracts in the manner proposed, which have been stated, are generally,

1st, That the proposed new stock will be redeemable at the pleasure of the United States, by which condition the government will possess the power of reducing the rate of interest, or refunding the capital at periods when the reinbursements may be difficult or disadvantageous to the creditors.

2d, That the proposed addition of one half per centum per annum to the rates of interest does not afford an equivalent for the expenses of agency, loss upon the exchange, and the risk of remittances from America, and

3d, That the facilities which attend the negociation of bonds payable to bearer, over funds which can only be transferred at the treasury or loan offices in the United States, render the obligations of foreign debt, in their present form, particularly eligible for foreign creditors.

It is not yet ascertained that these objections will be conclusive in the minds of the creditors against the proposed re-loan, and circumstances are not unlikely to happen which may in some degree abate their force. Nevertheless, as the object of converting the foreign debt into domestic stock is of real importance to the United States; as unprecedented difficulties attend remittances at present; as similar difficulties will always exist in a greater or less degree in time of war; and as in proportion to their operation they must endanger the public credit, the Secretary respectfully submits it to the house of Representatives to consider and determine whether some modification of the existing proposal be not expedient."

The report proceeded to state the failure of the attempt

to reimburse the instalment due in the past year, as already detailed in the letter to the President.

"It being rendered certain, that funds to meet the instalments of the foreign debt now annually falling due, must be remitted from the United States, measures have been taken for ascertaining whether the powers vested by law in the commissioners of the sinking fund, contain an adequate resource. As before mentioned these powers limit the rate of interest upon any loan to six per cent. per annum, and moreover provide that the capitals borrowed shall be redeemable at the option of the government.

"Though the rate of six per centum per annum, may be justly considered as a liberal compensation for the use of money in ordinary times, yet at the present moment, when the demand for American funds is greatly limited by the operation of the war in Europe, and when a variety of new objects are presented for the profitable employment of capital in this country, it is found that the redeemable quality of the stock which the commissioners of the sinking fund are authorized to constitute, will so far derogate from its value as to defeat the intention of the law.

"The Secretary is confident that the House of Representatives will appreciate fully all the arguments in favor of an augmentation of the revenue, for the purpose of reimbursing the foreign debt; and he therefore omits to make any comments on the statement of facts now presented. But it is his duty to observe that, if it shall be determined to confine the reimbursement of the public debt to the scale now established by law, it will be necessary to enlarge the powers granted to the commissioners of the sinking fund, in such manner as that there may exist a certainty of obtaining the necessary funds with that strict punctuality which it is necessary to observe, in whatever relates to the delicate concerns of public credit."

The report to the commissioners of the sinking fund, showed that further purchases of the debt had been made to the amount of $42,639 14—making, with the former purchases, the total amount of $2,307,661 71; and that there remained in the hands of the Treasurer the sum of $70,968 15, arising from dividends subsequent to the first of April preceding, which with the dividends to be made at the close of the year, and other appropriated funds, would be applied on the 1st January ensuing to the first reimbursement of the annuity on the six per cent. stock bearing a present interest.

One of the first acts of the House, was the appointment

of a standing committee of ways and means. This committee was raised in pursuance of a motion of Mr. Gallatin, of December 18th. To it were to be referred all reports from the Treasury Department, and all propositions relating to revenue; and it was made its duty to report on the state of the public debt, revenue and expenditures. The resolution was agreed to *nem. con.* on the 21st, and a committee of fourteen appointed, of which Mr. William Smith was made chairman. Among the members were Messrs. Sedgwick, Madison, Baldwin and Gallatin. Subsequent reports were made to the House by the Secretary, on the public debt. The one communicated on the 4th of January, presented a statement of the capitals of each species of debt, and the annuities which would be requisite to their discharge within certain specified periods. The results were thus summed up:

"If a revenue adequate to the payment of the sums included in this estimate were to be established, the following reductions of the public debt might be effected.

At the close of the year 1809, the whole foreign debt, amounting to $12,200,000, would be discharged, and an annuity of $573,632 02, now required for the payment of interest, would revert to the public.

At the close of the year 1818, the funded domestic debt, bearing a present interest of 6 per cent., would be discharged. This debt amounts to $29,310,856 86. The annuity then liberated would be $2,321,525 25.

At the close of the year 1824, the funded 6 per cent. stock bearing a future interest, amounting to $14,561,934 41, would also be reimbursed, when a further annuity of $1,146,370 34 would be liberated.

The act of the last session provides fully for the fulfilment of the two last mentioned objects, by an absolute appropriation of revenue.

After the reimbursement before mentioned, there would still remain the following sums of the existing debt:

| | |
|---|---|
| The stock bearing 3 per cent. interest being, - - | $19,569,909 63 |
| The stock bearing 5 1-2 per cent. interest, - - | 1,848,900 00 |
| " " " 4 1-2 " " " - - - | 176,000 00 |
| The capital of the present unfunded debt, with arrearages of interest prior to 1791, estimated at, - - - | 1,382,837 37 |
| And the capital existing in loans of the bank of the United States and Bank of New York, - - - - | 6,200,000 00 |
| Amounting in the whole to - - - - | $29,177,647 00 |

But if a revenue were to be established, equal to what will be requisite to satify the public engagements upon the scale of expenditure which will be necessary in the year 1801, the whole of the public debt might be extinguished by payment or purchase, at or before the close of the year 1824, as also a very considerable additional debt, if any such should arise out of future contingencies.

This view of the public engagements will, it is presumed, demonstrate to the committee, that in the arrangements which have been hitherto made, an attention has not been wanting to secure a right of reimbursing the debt, fully if not more than equal to what the United States can exercise; and that the unforeseen events which have lately happened in Europe, render it necessary to combine some efficacious plan for obtaining loans with any augmentation of the revenue which it may now be judged expedient to establish.

After a full consideration of different expedients, it has appeared to me most eligible to propose a commutation of the whole debt due to the Bank of the United States, into a funded domestic stock, bearing interest at six per cent. per annum, transferable at the treasury and loan offices respectively, and irredeemable for such a period as will invite purchases at par. Considering the great capitals which will soon be demandable, or which are in a train of reimbursement in consequence of the act of the last session, it is evident that if the proposed new stock were to be declared irredeemable for a period of twenty or twenty-five years, still the purchase or redemption of the remaining debt would be sufficient for the employment of any revenues which can readily be acquired. It will also appear that such an arrangement would leave it in the power of the United States to reimburse the proposed new stock at a favorable period, by the application of revenue which will then be liberated in consequence of the final reimbursement of the six per cent. stock, bearing a present interest. The utility of the proposed measure can, I presume, receive but little illustration beyond that afforded by a naked exhibition of the public engagements. It is indeed very probable that the final payment of the public debt, instead of being postponed by any existing stipulations which forbid reimbursements, will in fact be rendered additionally burdensome, if it be not somewhat retarded, by conditions which require re-payments at fixed periods. The difficulties which are now experienced in respect to the foreign debt, effectually demonstrate the impolicy of unnecessarily contracting engagements which cannot be satisfied directly from the proceeds of the revenue. At no time will those who negociate loans for the public, be able to calculate the value of money, or the probability of an increase or reduction of the rate of interest, with greater precision than those who lend. At all times must the borrower be exposed to certain expenses, risks and embarrassments, for which no equivalent can be obtained."

A second report recommended a change in the mode of paying the 2 per cent., reimbursement of principal of the 6 per cent., stock, and that the reimbursement be extended to the debts due the States. With regard to the conversion of the foreign debt, it was suggested that the renun-

ciation of the right of redemption until 1819, would be attended with no inconvenience to the United States, and might facilitate the operation. The giving discretionary power to the President to appoint an agent in Holland, was also recommended.

The internal revenues were the subject of a long report from the Commissioner, prepared in pursuance of a resolution passed at the close of the last session. It should be remembered that the duties, as contained in this report, on objects other than domestic distilled spirits and stills, were for the first year of their collection, and upon the latter articles also for a period in which they had not been uniformly received, on account of the obstructions opposed to them. The kinds and amounts were as follows:

STATEMENT OF THE DOMESTIC REVENUES.

| | |
|---|---|
| Domestic distilled spirits, | $357,539 31 |
| Sales at auction, | 31,289 91 |
| Snuff manufactured, | 2,399 08 |
| Snuff mills, | 7,112 00 |
| Refined sugar, | 33,988 28 |
| Carriages, | 41,421 17 |
| Retailers' licenses, | 54,731 54 |
| Total amount internal revenues, | $528,481 31 |
| Total expenses of collection, | 84,943 21 |
| Nett amount of revenue, | $443,538 10 |

The expenses and the number of officers employed in the collection of these duties, had been an argument alleged against them, and this report was called for in substantiation of the objections. The subject was treated by Mr. Gallatin in his Sketch of the Finances of the United States, published during the ensuing fall.

The expenses, it is to be observed, varied materially with the different objects of collection; the only one on

which they bore a heavy ratio to the amount raised, was that on distilled spirits and stills—the most productive of all; and in this even they varied, according as the spirits were manufactured from domestic or foreign materials.

According to Mr. Gallatin's computations, the average expense of collection of the duties on spirits distilled from all materials, was 25 per cent., viz: 31 per cent. on those from domestic, and 14 1-2 on those from foreign materials. The two were properly inseparable, because one must have been unproductive without the other; but it was argued from this dissected calculation, that a tax, the collection of which cost 30 per cent., must necessarily be a very bad one. It however appeared that this excise was connected with the impost on imported spirits, which amounted to $1,500,000, and which would be much affected by the removal of a tax on those of home manufacture, and Mr. Gallatin himself admitted that it would be better to modify the tax by laying the duties on the stills exclusively, instead of the product, than to repeal it altogether. The other duties cost much less in proportion. The expenses of the duties on licenses to retailers of wines and spirits, and upon sales by auction, were only 2 1-2 per cent. Those on sugar refined, and on pleasure carriages, five per cent. The tax on snuff was found to be attended with inherent difficulties, and was soon suspended; it is therefore not included in the calculation. The expenses on all these objects together, had, according to his computation, been about 18 per cent. and this at a time when the arrangements were but imperfectly completed; they were estimated for the future, allowing only a much smaller advance than actually took place, at 17 per cent.

The aggregate result, as well as the ratio of expense to revenue of the excise on spirits, presented apparent grounds for the attack; but it is to be noted in the first place, that the imposition of an entirely new system of taxation is necessarily attended with many imperfections which

time and experience remedy, and that while the cost of collection would in future increase but little, the proceeds would largely increase, as the fact soon proved. In the course of five years, the internal revenues nearly doubled in productiveness, while the expense was stationary. This too was the case under very light duties, and the excise was capable both of increase and of extension to many more objects, had it been necessary. There was moreover, one great and conclusive argument in favor of the retention of these revenues. The excise was part of a system by which the author intended the present reinforcement of the import duties, and a resource in time of war, when these would necesarily be cut down or destroyed. Sad experience taught the great opponent of the system the wisdom on which it was founded.

The "army of office-holders" under the excise, were the following in the whole extent of the United States:— Sixteen supervisors, twenty-two inspectors, two hundred and thirty-six collectors (of whom fourteen were also officers of the import revenue) and sixty-three auxiliary officers. In all, three hundred and thirty-seven.

FROM FISHER AMES.

Dedham, Dec. 31, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

I am greatly obliged by your favour covering Mr. R's. vindication, as you will believe, when I acquaint you that I have read till I am stupified, and my task is not finished, nor my curiosity sated. The subject and the title led me to look for a plausible vindication at least. Taking his whole mystical story for true, the cause for wonder is not removed if the censure is shifted; something strange, and because it is strange, probably wicked, has been done or attempted. The tale of a foreigner's zeal to bring to light conspiracies against our government, and the need there was of resorting to a foreigner to use his flour contractors in the affair, is strange—passing strange. The public opinion has, I believe, passed sentence without waiting for the tardy evidence of his book. It is however, a precious book, and ought to be made to yield treasure to the federalists like a mine. I rejoice to hear that the answer to the speech has not conjured up the evil spirits that were expected to rise on this occasion. Let our three branches keep duly united, and the efforts of party will be impotent, at least for a time.

The people are coming right. I send you a sermon, which I wish our friends Ellsworth, Cabot, Jed. Smith and Thatcher may see. Afterwards, I think it could do good if Mr. Cabot would send it under cover to Mr. Izard, and get it (the political part) published in a Charleston paper. I am, with unfeigned regard, &c., dear sir, yours truly,

FISHER AMES.

## FROM WILLIAM ELLERY.

NEWPORT, January 11th, 1796.

[Private.]

Sir,

Agreeably to your request contained in your private letter of the 21st of last month, I have endeavoured to ascertain the point you wish to have determined.

When Mr. Randolph arrived here the boarding houses were full, and he took lodgings in a private house, procured for him by the keeper of the boarding house where he dieted. With the owner of the former I have some acquaintance. I have asked him and his wife such questions, as I thought would lead to a discovery of what I wished to know, and could only learn, that between the part of the house where the family resided and he lodged, there was no communication, and that the front door of the house was left unlocked, that he might go in and out at what times he pleased without observation. I am not acquainted with the keeper of the boarding house, and no material information could I expect to receive from that quarter if he were able to give it. When Mr. Randolph, was here M. Fauchet with his secretary and servant, resided by themselves in a house hired by the French vice-consul, and went off in the Medusa; and the vice-consul was not a proper person to apply to on this occasion. I had hopes of receiving some information from the Marshal of this district, who came here a few days since from Providence, where he lives, but could learn no more from him, than what Mr. Randolph has said in his vindication, about his having a fast sailing boat to go in pursuit of the Medusa, excepting that when he made his request he appeared to be much agitated. A gentleman of credit in this town has informed me, that he went to visit Mr. Randolph the day he arrived here, that he was absent, and that after waiting an hour and a half he departed without seeing him.

That Mr. Randolph was in private conversation and consultation with M. Fauchet, there can be no doubt, although it should be impracticable to ascertain the fact by personal testimony. The necessity of his situation required that M. Fauchet should explain No. 10 in a manner favourable to his character. That the certificate was drafted in part, if not in whole, before M. Fauchet went on board the Medusa is highly probable, if not certain. The time which passed between his going on board and Captain Gardner's leaving the ship, (as he has informed me) was not more than an hour and a quarter, and that in my opinion was too short to form an instrument so long, and in the fabrication of which it was necessary to refer to several papers, and which far from being plain and simple bears strong marks of toil and artifice. Besides, the gentleman who called

upon Mr. Randolph before mentioned, further has told me that the day after the Medusa sailed, in conversation with him, Mr. Randolph said, that the last time, in the forenoon of the day she sailed, when he went to M. Fauchet, the vice-consul told him that he was on board the ship, that he had been writing something for him, but not having time to complete it, he would finish it on board, and send it to him.

The same gentleman told me that he was credibly informed, that at a house where M. Fauchet was invited to dine, prior to Randolph's coming here, that he said in the course of conversation, that Mr. Randolph was a d—d rascal. Desirous to find out on what subject the conversation was employed, in which such a violent, contemptuous expression was introduced, I requested a friend of mine and an acquaintance of the person with whom Fauchet dined, to make the enquiry. M. Fauchet regretted very much, that on his return to France he must advise his constituents that he had been deceived—that he has found that none but men of no information, of small fortunes and influence, were on the side of France ; that the men of influence, and those near the President were honest, and especially Mr. Hamilton, that he was candid and undisguised, and for strictly supporting our neutrality ; but that Randolph was a deceiver, and had already deceived him, and when he said this, he used the most contemptuous expressions ; the conversation was in French ; and that Fauchet did not say that Randolph was a d—d rascal, but that the expressions were highly contemptuous. This is the substance of the discourse as reported to me by my friend, and I relate it as curious, although not connected with your request.

If I should discover anything that will serve to ascertain what you particularly wish to know, I will communicate. I am much obliged to you for the copy you sent me of Mr. Randolph's vindication. That publication, as far as I have heard of its effect, has injured his character rather than vindicated his conduct, and if possible has added to the reputation of the President among his friends, and confounded his enemies, the first of whom to save his own, he has endeavoured to lessen, and the last of whom it was intended to increase and encourage. I am, with great respect, sir, your obedient servant,

WM. ELLERY.

The conduct of the earlier part of the session will be seen in the following letters.

### CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 12, 1796.

Sir,

Instead of the animated session which had been anticipated hitherto, the contrary extreme has proved to be the case—a debility in the House of Representatives, to whom it belongs to originate the important and essential measures of the government, which evinces either want of talent, or timidity. It is also apparent there is a vulgarity in many particulars, beneath the character of gentlemen. I hope the discernment of the well informed part of the community will

impute these disgraces on the public councils, (so extremely mortifying) to their true character and real authors. No doubt a majority of the members owe their seats to clubs, factions, and the feverish state of things at the time of the election. 'Tis true the disorganizers have now the power to bring forward their systems of reform, and that they dare not—it would create a responsibility which above all things they fear; we think the leaders were never more discontented with their ground than at present; their object has been to keep up a fret on the public mind, and avail themselves of it for disorganization and cabal. The friends of the government are willing to let them disclose their views and true character; we don't despair that when they find their total decrepitude, we may be able to carry the measures absolutely necessary to keep the machine in motion, till a more wise and honest representation can be obtained. However important the execution of the British treaty is to our affairs, I consider an extension and improvement to our revenue more consequential. It is idle to imagine that the public debt can be discharged by imposts, and a paltry tax on stills, snuff, carriages, &c.

If we are sincere in the business, or indeed having a government, we must be willing that the United States shall by a certain mode of collection, come upon the body of the property. A tax on land is imagined as impracticable; Massachusetts and Rhode Island are subject to state debts, and have no other means. The mode of proportioning them provided by the Constitution, is an inequitable one, and very burdensome to New England. Our revenue already is drawn from the middle and eastern states, and expended on the frontiers where the inhabitants do every thing in their power to embarrass our affairs, and would not be satisfied if we should diet and clothe them at public expense. What is to be done, is one of the most puzzling questions this country has had to determine since the organization of the government. The evidence of the attachment of the people to the government is an encouraging circumstance. Massachusetts has retained her reputation. New York is making a rapid progress in correct views; the body of this state is right; and if we can credit the best men in Virginia, the democrats are there losing ground. The Supreme Court is in session—a good deal of important business before them. Mr. Cushing refuses his appointment as Chief-Justice. No successor has been appointed.

We are well. I have suffered much from the headache, but hope I have become more accustomed to the habits of living and this climate, and shall in future be free from this evil. We all join in remembrances of affection. I am, sir, with respect, your obedient humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## URIAH TRACY TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 10th, 1796.

Sir,

* * * *

Congress are passing through a state of preparation, and are of course somewhat quiet; the stillness is like that which in the natural world precedes a storm.

When the ratification of the British treaty arrives, the onset is to be proclaimed, and a battle we must have, and if nothing else is destroyed, I think we may fairly conclude, a great deal of time will be.

Mr. Cushing who was appointed Chief-Justice, in room of Mr. Rutledge, resigned, has declined the preferment; of course, a Chief-Justice will probably soon be nominated. Who will be the man is not known. Mr. Paterson of New Jersey is thought of, but our President keeps his own counsel tolerably well, till he acts officially.

Randall and Whiting, together with a fine standard,[a] and two or three fine speeches, fill up this awkward interval, before the solid ebullitions of patriotism can break forth upon the British treaty, better than one can imagine; for our southern brethren begin to swear, if the ratification does not soon arrive, they shall lose in these amusing scenes one great advantage, which they expected, of striking while the iron is hot.

Indeed nothing is more manifest than a prevailing coolness, among the patriots here and at the south. I presage from it more strength to the government and federal measures. You will not mistake me, when I use the word patriots, I mean those who are so modest as to call themselves exclusively patriots. That class of gentry is certainly a little crest fallen. The assemblies of Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania, have not answered their expections. The Senate of Pennsylvania have this day almost unanimously rejected the Virginia amendments to the Constitution, which you will recollect were to extend treaty making to the House of Representatives, &c., and have in a preamble stated two or three matters, which in their opinions might with more propriety be added to the constitution, viz: to make lands responsible for debts, free the negroes, or not consider them in the number of representations, &c. Your family and friends here are well. I am, sir, with great respect, your obedient humble servant,

URIAH TRACY.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, Feb. 15, 1796.

Sir,

* * * Mr. Randolph's character, as far as I am informed, is absolutely blasted. His vindication, as he calls it, has ascertained his guilt. I do not find by the papers that even the democrats venture to support him; and I do not perceive that any one will suffer by his misconduct. Some errors of opinion only are developed, an imperfection which no one is exempt from.

Mr. Tracy, in a letter to me of the 10th instant, says that the hobby horse of the treaty has not arrived, but I do not believe it will be judged best, while the opposers of government are continually receiving from every quarter the deepest mortification, that this publication should be delayed. These men will find their ambition extremely disappointed.

I do not find that any thing very material has been done in Congress. If they

[a] That presented by the French Minister, Adet.

shall do only what is essentially necessary, and no mischief, it is all which is expected from them. I do not regret their dilatory proceedings. I believe that our shipping is sufficiently large. I doubt the policy of increasing it by restrictions at present, for various reasons. The revenue I perceive is increasing, but those who are opposed to the funding system, are willing so far as I perceive, to increase the expenditures. In like manner these men were disposed to adopt every measure to precipitate us into a war, but opposed to every mode of defence. Derangement of every kind seems to be their object. I believe charity requires that a good part of their conduct ought to be attributed to their extreme ignorance. I am very confidant that wisdom, in Virginia, is absolutely different from what it is considered to be with us. Mr. Cushing, I understand, has declined his preferment; he is a good and respectable character. I knew Samuel Chase, and to you I will say, that I have but an unworthy opinion of him. The character of the government will depend upon that of its officers. To respect a man because he is of a party, and to gratify them, will always be found false policy. A public officer is neither to attach himself to, nor fear any one.

What events will take place in this State in consequence of the death of Governor Huntington, is very uncertain. The late faction was disappointed in the last election. The heads of it are at present deeply engaged in the land speculation. The mode of sale of our western lands, rather than the application of the money, I well knew was the principal occasion of their last exertion. It is too early for them to appear, but they will renew their efforts. Our western lands I am told, now sell at 105 cents per acre. Upon the death of Governor Huntington, I supposed it proper for me to write to the President of the United States. Copies of my letter and his answer I will enclose for your amusement.

Among so many of my family connections at Philadelphia, we hoped to receive more letters than we do. You are easily excused during the session of Congress, as you are perpetually called upon by those who insist upon acting upon their own opinions and investigations, while if they do any thing correct, they are entirely obliged to others in both these respects. My kindest regards to you all. I am, &c.,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen., TO THE PRESIDENT.

Litchfield, Jan. 21st, 1796

Sir,

I conceive it to be my duty to inform you, that in consequence of the death of our late worthy Governor, his Excellency Samuel Huntington, the powers annexed to that office have devolved upon me, as Lieut. Governor of the State, and you will be so pleased Sir, to be assured that whatever official duties you shall require of me will be strictly observed.[a]

Permit me, Sir, upon this occasion, to express the deep regret which I have long felt at the extreme impropriety with which the national administration has

[a] At the ensuing election General Wolcott was chosen Governor of the State, and Jonathan Trumbull, at this time a Senator, Lieutenant Governor.

been treated by disappointed ambition, and from other motives not less improper; and to assure you, Sir, that the people of Connecticut have ever preserved the most perfect confidence in the wisdom and rectitude of your administration, and are fully persuaded that in consequence thereof, their country has been exempted from evils the most calamitous and distressing; and they are very sensible that they enjoy every benefit which can possibly be derived from government.

The favourable opinion which you have been pleased to entertain of my son, by appointing him to the very important and confidential office of Secretary of the Treasury, excites in me the most agreeable reflections. I shall flatter myself, Sir, that he will, by his assiduity, discretion and fidelity, continue to merit the confidence you have placed in him. With great deference, esteem and respect, I am sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## THE PRESIDENT TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, February 1st, 1796.

Sir,

I have been duly honored with your letter of the 21st ult., announcing the death of Mr. Huntington, late governor of Connecticut.

At the same time that I regret the loss of so worthy a character, I cannot but feel consoled, that the administration of the government of that State has fallen into such good hands as yours; and let me pray you to accept my sincere thanks for the assurance therein given, of your readiness to observe the relationship which it bears to the general government. I feel equally obliged by the expression of your concern for the attacks which have been made upon my administration.

If the enlightened and virtuous part of the community will make allowances for my involuntary errors, I will promise they shall have no cause to accuse me of wilful ones. Hoping for the first, I feel no concern on account of the latter.

Your son, as far as my knowledge of him extends, is a very deserving character. He discharges the duties of his office with ability and integrity; and I am persuaded may bid defiance to all those, who seem to be continually on the look-out for occasions (without being at the trouble to investigate facts) to arraign the conduct of public officers. With great respect and esteem, I am, sir, your obedient humble servant,

GO: WASHINGTON.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 17th, 1796.

Sir,

I accord in the sentiments you express in your favour of the 22d instant, on the posture of public affairs. The present faction, I trust, must yield to the energy of the sense and property of the country.

The Spanish Treaty is not public; no doubt it is a favourable one for the

interests of this country. The navigation of the Mississippi is opened—the territorial line is adjusted according to our claim. New Orleans is made a depot, free of duty except wharfage and storage. It is expected the President will lay the British Treaty before us, notwithstanding the want of the copy that has been ratified. The determination is not yet known on the subject, but it procrastinates so many measures of the government, it is very desirable that business be disposed of. If the House can have the madness to check its operation, it will so essentially change the constitution we must shape our course accordingly. I trust that will not be the case, though at present the disorganizers on that and every national question can claim a majority.

The Virginia Amendments every where meet a merited repulse. The President's birthday has been celebrated with unusual cordiality. In haste, I subscribe myself your obedient humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 21st, 1796.

Sir,

The articles of business before the House and committees are:—1. A bill for compensation of members of Congress; 2. For Indian trade; 3. For protecting the Indians against aggressions from the whites; 4. Ways and Means; 5. Tonnage and foreign vessels; 6. Protecting duties; 7. Land office bill; 8. Indirect taxes; 9. Criminal code; 10. Military establishment; 11. Bankrupt bill; 12. Militia bill; 13. Impressment of American seamen by foreign powers; 14. Clerks in the various offices; 15. Federal City; 16. Survey of post roads; 17. Bill of outlawry; 18. Messrs. Swanwick's and Smith's election; 19. Naval equipment; 20. Mint. Provisional measures to execute the treaty with England will be taken up as soon as the President shall place it before us. Undoubtedly there are many others which don't occur to my recollection. I have given you this list that you may see in what a political fog we are enclosed. A small share of common sense, readily suggests that nothing can be done with many of these objects; nothing ought to be done with others at present; and what ought to be done is with those that now are essential matters of legislation. The measure of an Indian trade, is strongly recommended by the President, and a bill has passed the House and been consented to by the Senate, with amendments. The bill originally confined the trial to the place where offences were committed, or the offender should be found. The amendment authorizes the President to fix the place of trial. On this point, in this as well as the other bill relative to the Indians, there must be a struggle; and after all it is uncertain whether peace can be kept on the frontier without the establishment of martial law, and it is questionable with the friends of government, whether the constitution authorizes such a measure.

Before an examination I made lately of revenue and expenditures, I was not aware how much of our money was expended in our new settlements. Revenue comes from the seaboard and is dissipated in the western country.

The matter of tonnage and protecting duties originated from the scattered brains of S. Smith, of Maryland. The necessary documents to show the com-

parative state of American, with foreign tonnage have been had from the Treasury and the matter rests.

A bankrupt bill similar to that reported this session, has been for several past sessions before Congress. The subject is too complicated to become a national measure until our system shall have become more harmonized, or the powers of the national government shall come more intimately among the body of the people; such too is the case with the militia bill.

Mr. Edward Livingston is the mover of the ameliorating system of penal law and of the relief and protection of impressed seamen. He teems too with holy indignation against fraud. In the memorable era of scrip, he committed a fraudulent bankruptcy with others of his family and dignified line of ancestry. He now lives here in the style of a nabob. I wish the first measure was in more competent hands, that some arrangement might be made relative to prisons, &c. At present it is mere rant.

A resolution for guaranteeing a loan to complete the buildings in the Federal City has passed; a bill also is reported. Whatever sum we guarantee, I consider an expenditure under a disguised form, and think we ought not now to adopt the child. No doubt the President thinks the city lots will defray the whole expense, and the Union never be subjected. In this he probably is in error. All we can now successfully do in the House is to lessen the sum. The Senate are in the habit of right conduct; I hope they will reject this measure, and even that has its evils. The President and Senate, however they may seem to be disjoined by the constitution, must in practice be almost an indivisible power.

Our course about a naval equipment is obvious; to equip two ships for protecting our harbours from petty insults and privateers, and to lay up the timber, &c., on hand that is superfluous. The matter of survey of post roads, brought forward by Mr. Madison, I suspect is connected with the Federal City. Roads in the southern states are but little better than in a state of nature, and when the whole shall become disclosed, I imagine the result will be to draw the revenue of the Post Office to that quarter; and it wears the appearance of ultimate success, as the interests of the interior (if not the city) of this state will be coalesced with Virginia.

A land office bill is before us, and has been several days in discussion, to bring to market our western lands whereto the Indian title has been extinguished. It will be carried, if the crude schemes and local views of the abettors of this measure can fix any mode of compromise. One most pernicious idea is held out to give it popularity; that it is a fund for the redemption of the public debt. It is glossed over with the pretence of accommodation to the agricultural interests Past experience of the expense attendant on the rude, unsocial and discontented inhabitants of the new country, makes no impression. Democrats in the national councils are what I always found them in the state legislature—outrageous against debt already incurred, clamorous for its extinction, never themselves devising means of payment, merely suggesting such as they know impracticable, inveighing against every object and mode of collection for revenue brought forward by others, profuse of public money on old dormant claims and favorites, and with the most glaring impudence, throwing the revenue on partial and favoured

sections of the Union. They even deny support to the essential officers of government.

If we were to judge from present appearances, we should conclude there was a concerted system on the part of the anti-federalists, to palsy the government, and to bring its great departments to a stand while in the administration of its present agents—in short, to disgrace past measures, and from the fretfulness a prostrate government must necessarily produce, to change men, if not systems.

I don't despair that such a design, if it really be a systematical measure, and not merely a dirty courting of popularity, will yet be counteracted. We can't smother our own anxiety on this score, and if we don't draw these disorganizers from their skulking ground to aid the public business by sufficient measures, or point the public indignation against them, the truly valuable characters must quit the public service. It ought to be known that there is a decided majority of the opposers of the government in the House of Representative. The question must be asked, why they don't do the business? Our situation is an extremely mortifying one—a minority without even a chance of an opposition—a minority on whom the lead of the public conduct is thrown, with a majority to encounter. Nothing but rascality combined with folly, could produce this state. I believe it is too painful for either side long to endure, and that it will end to the advantage of the government. The letters we receive attribute an undeserved credit to the present House for their dispassionateness. I had imagined there would have been sufficient sagacity to have seen that it was what Fauchet calls the balancing of parties. The friends of government have been willing to give the reformers the ground to eclaircise their views, and to espouse any efficient measures they would originate.

We are yet at a loss what they mean to do on every question of finance. Madison, Gallatin and Baldwin, are members of the committee of ways and means. They have been pushed, beyond all bounds of delicacy, to say what shall be done; nothing explicit can be gained from them. They neither will propose, or pledge themselves to support the measures of others—they reserve their opinions for the House. In this committee are a majority of persons of correct views, and we may expect a well-founded report.

The confidence of many of the friends of the treaty within a few days, has been lessened in respect to our ultimate success. We have reason to believe a meeting of the leaders in opposition, was held one night last week on that subject, and they pledged themselves to a serious opposition. The next morning, Livingston made his ranting speech about seamen. We know, and always have, that a majority is prejudiced against the treaty; I still believe we shall appropriate the money to execute it, though likely previous resolutions execrating the treaty, may be carried.

The treaty is not arrived. Mr. Deas, the agent, was instructed to have three copies signed, and to send them. He has been guilty of the gross blunder of forwarding only an unsigned copy of the ratifying clause, in a letter to the President, in which he communicates its ratification. It could not be foreseen that any public agent could be so ignorant of the forms of business, as to commit such a mistake. I believe the President has not determined on the course he shall

take, in case an authenticated copy of the treaty does not come to hand. Several former treaties have been proclaimed, without the instrument being acted upon by Congress. Probably the most favourable time for its discussion in the House of Representatives, has passed. The disturbances in England are a rich repast for our democrats, and the exertions of the French are incessant.

We just received the news that a committee of the Legislature of Georgia have reported, that the grants or sales of the lands of that State, were obtained by bribery and corruption, that the whole proceedings were void, that the executive should cause the acts in that respect to be publicly burned, and that there should be an entire obliteration of all the records, files, &c. It is said nearly twenty millions of acres of this land is holden in Massachusetts. For one Legislature to declare a former one corrupt, is an unprecedented usurpation of the right of trial and judgment.

It may not be necessary to make an appeal to the public on the existing state of things. If it shall become so, the time is not yet arrived, and therefore it may be prudent not to disclose the real truth faster than the evidence shall crowd it forward.

We all join in sentiments of respect and affection. I am your ob't and humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, March 2, 1796.

Dear Sir,

The President has communicated the British treaty to Congress, and proclaimed it to be the law of the land. By the House it is referred to a committee of the whole on the state of the Union. It is uncertain what direction this business will take.

Ever since I have seen a disposition among the disorganizers to bring the merits of a treaty into discussion before the House of Representatives, I have embraced an opinion that the attempt was such a violation of the constitution, and usurpation on the general suffrage secured to the small states in the Senate, that it became necessary for each representative of that opinion to declare such to be their sense and protest against it. I fear, however, that all of us don't possess the necessary firmness for such a step ; and it is of so delicate a nature, that an entire union only could justify, or carry that dread to the disorganizers which would give it weight and effect.

Our business soon must assume a more important aspect. I shall send the papers, and shall be much gratified by your opinions and those of well informed men of your acquaintance, so far as they come to your knowledge, on the important business on hand.

I am now entirely free from pain in my head. Mrs. Wolcott has been indisposed, but is now recovered. In haste I subscribe myself, your obedient humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## OLIVER ELLSWORTH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, March 8, 1796.

Sir,

A peace has been purchased from the Regency of Algiers and the captives redeemed. We pay for both about $760,000, besides an annuity of about $24,000, and not less than $250,000 more will be requisite for Tunis and Tripoli, with whom negociations are in a train. The terms, though humiliating, are as moderate as there was reason to expect, or as any maritime nation probably could have obtained. It is hoped that the profits of the Mediterranean trade will reimburse this expense, but the great and indispensable object is security to our navigation upon the Atlantic.

We have at length also a treaty with Spain. She abandons her territorial claim eastward of the Mississippi and north of the 31st degree of latitude, and is to withdraw her garrisons within six months, open the navigation of the river from its source to the ocean, and grant us the privilege of New Orleans as a place of deposit for merchandise, duty free. This was all that was asked, and something more than could of right be demanded.

As to the British treaty, about which so much has been said and so much misunderstood, it only remains for the House of Representatives to agree to the requisite appropriations for carrying it into effect. They are just now entering upon the anxious discussion, and will, I trust, after spending a great deal of time in doubtful debate and menacing movements, finally conclude that there would be too much responsibility in deciding wrong.

It is, sir, my duty to acquaint you that I have, with some hesitation, accepted an appointment in the judiciary of the United States, which of course vacates my seat in the Senate. This step, I hope, will not be regarded as disrespectful to a state which I have so long had the honour to serve, and whose interests must forever remain precious to my heart. I am, sir, with perfect respect, your obedient and humble servant,

OLIVER ELLSWORTH

# CHAPTER XI.

## FOURTH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION CONTINUED.

The opposition in their answer to the President's speech had given sufficient evidence of their feeling in regard to the British treaty. In February it was returned, ratified in the form advised by the Senate, and the President thereupon issued a proclamation requiring its observance, and transmitted a copy to each house. As this treaty contained a provision for the payment of a sum of money, the action of the House of Representatives was necessary to carry it into effect, and an opportunity was therefore offered to the majority to defeat the operation of a measure so discordant with their views, by refusing the requisite appropriation. On the 2d of March, Mr. Livingston brought forward his resolution requesting the President to "lay before the House a copy of the instructions to the Minister of the United States who negotiated a treaty with the King of Great Britain, communicated by his message of the first of March, together with the correspondence and other documents relative to the said treaty." This was afterwards amended by inserting the words "excepting such of the said papers as any existing negociations may render improper to be disclosed." The resolution was debated until the 24th of March, the opposition assuming the ground that the house had a right to judge of the expediency of carrying into effect every treaty which required the exercise of legislative functions.

On that day it was carried in the affirmative, and on the next, the committee appointed to present it, reported the answer of the President, "that he would take the subject into consideration."[a]

The question had not been overlooked by the President. The following letter was addressed to Wolcott the day after the motion was made.

FROM THE PRESIDENT.

THURSDAY MORN., 3d March.

[Private.]

Dear Sir,

I perceive by Bache's paper of this morning, that Mr. Livingston has laid a resolution on the table, requesting the President to lay before the house a copy of the instructions to Mr. Jay, "who negociated the treaty with the King of G. B., communicated by his message of the 1st inst., together with the correspondence and documents relative to the said treaty."

A request somewhat similar to this, was made or about to be made, I do not now recollect which, nor the conduct that was observed on the occasion, as it was two, three, or more years ago; but as Col. Hamilton was privy to it, I would thank you, if he has not left the city, to see and converse with him thereon—learn what the case and result was, and what he thinks ought to be the conduct of the President if Mr. L's. motion reaches him. Cases of this kind are to be found in the British House of Commons, but I do not recollect the result.—At 10 o'clock the gentlemen were to meet here by appointment. Yours always,

GO: WASHINGTON.

At the time of the negotiation of the treaty with McGillivray, the chief of the Creek nation, in 1790, the same question had arisen, and in a more direct form, as to the operation of a treaty where in matters of legislation the House of Representatives would have been the originating body. The case then was, whether goods imported into the United States for the use of the Indians, could by treaty stipulation be exempted from duties. In other words, whether a treaty could regulate commerce. In regard to this, Marshall observes: "with that cautious cir-

[a] Vide V. Marshall, p. 533, et seq.

cumspection which marked his political course, the President took this point into early consideration and required the opinion of his constitutional advisers respecting it. The SECRETARY OF STATE was of opinion that the stipulation for importing his [McGillivray's] goods through the United States, duty free, might safely be made. 'A treaty made by the President with the concurrence of the Senate was,' he said, 'a law of the land, and a law of superior order; because it not only repeals past laws, but cannot itself be repealed by future ones. The treaty then will legally control the duty act, and the act for licensing traders in this particular instance.' From this opinion there is no reason to suppose that any member of the cabinet dissented. A secret article providing for the case was submitted to the Senate, and it has never been understood that in advising and consenting to it that body was divided."[a] The present occasion furnished another proof that, with Mr. Jefferson, principles changed as well as men.

In a letter to Mr. Monroe, of March 21, 1796, he says, in reference to Mr. Livingston's resolution, "We conceive the constitutional doctrine to be, that though the President and Senate have the general power of making treaties, yet wherever they include in a treaty, matters confided by the constitution to the three branches of the legislature, an act of legislation will be requisite to confirm these articles; and that the House of Representatives, as one branch of the legislature, are perfectly free to pass the act or refuse it; governing themselves by their own judgment whether it is for the good of their own constituents to let the treaty go into effect or not."[b] It must have required nicer powers of casuistry than any but Mr. Jefferson possessed, to have drawn between these two cases a distinction sufficiently plausible to have deceived oneself.

[a] V. Marshall, 233, note.

[b] III. Jefferson's Writings, 323.

FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

March, 1796.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed are two letters which I will thank you to send on.

I have just seen *Livingston's* motion concerning instructions, &c. My first impression is that the propriety of a compliance with the call, if made, is extremely doubtful. But much careful thought on the subject is requisite. Yours truly,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S. I send you also a letter from Mrs. Church to Mr. Beaumeté, which I will thank you to send to Mr. Talleyrand.

The opinions of the members of the cabinet were required on the points stated, as follows:

FROM THE PRESIDENT.

PHILADELPHIA, 25 March, 1796.

Sir,

The resolution moved in the House of Representatives for the papers relative to the negotiation of the treaty with Great Britain, having passed in the affirmative, I request your opinion—

Whether that branch of Congress hath of hath not a right, by the constitution, to call for these papers?

Whether, if it does not possess the right, it would be expedient under the circumstances of this particular case, to furnish them?

And in either case, what terms would be most proper to comply with, or refuse the request of the House?

These opinions in writing, and your attendance will be expected at 12 o'clock to-morrow.

GO: WASHINGTON.

To the SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

TO THE PRESIDENT.

March 26, 1796.

The Secretary of the Treasury, in obedience to the command of the President of the United States, respectfully submits his opinion, upon certain questions arising out of the following case.

On the 24th instant, the following resolution passed the House of Representatives of the United States.

"Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to lay before this House a copy of the instructions given to the Minister of the United States,

who negotiated the treaty with Great Britain, communicated by his message of the 1st instant, together with the correspondence and documents relating to the said treaty; excepting such of said papers as any existing negotiation may render improper to be disclosed."

The general question to be considered is, whether it be or be not expedient for the President to comply in whole or in part with the request contained in said resolution? The importance of this question may be inferred from the unqualified terms of the resolution, which clearly assert a *right* on the part of the House, to demand the instructions and documents relating to the negotiation of a ratified treaty. It has been urged with great force in the course of the debate, *that the House of Representatives has a right to judge of a treaty, which affects objects upon which Congress can constitutionally legislate, and that their co-operation and sanction are necessary to render it obligatory as a law of the land.*

This position has been supported by the following construction of the Constitution. That the power of making treaties without the co-operation of the House, though expressed in general terms, is in fact limited by that part of the Constitution which defines the legislative power, or power of Congress. Thus, though it seems to be admitted that if a treaty did not operate upon any objects of legislation delegated to Congress, it might be valid without the consent of the House of Representatives, yet it is asserted, that in cases where the aid of the legislature is necessary to give effect to a treaty, or where a treaty operates upon any objects of legislation, the sanction of the House is necessary, and may be given or withheld, according to the judgment formed by them of its expediency.

This construction evidently gives to the House of Representatives a negative voice, or concurrent authority with the President and Senate, in respect to the treaty lately negotiated with Great Britain; and as it is presumed can be shown, in respect to all treaties whatever.

This important question then arises: Has a treaty made by the President, with the advice and consent of two-thirds of the Senators, the force and obligation of law, without the consent of the House of Representatives? To a right judgment upon this question, a review of the public acts and proceedings of the United States in respect to the obligation of treaties, appears to be necessary.

The ninth article of the late confederation empowered the United States, in Congress assembled, to enter into treaties and alliances, provided that no treaty of commerce should be made, whereby the legislative power of the respective states should be restrained from imposing such imposts and duties on foreigners as their own people should be subjected to, or from prohibiting the exportation or importation of any species of goods or commodities whatever. Thus it appears, that although Congress, under the confederation, had no legislative powers whatever; and though they possessed no authority to regulate the general interest of commerce by any internal regulations, or even to restrain the clashing systems of the separate states; yet the power of forming commercial treaties with foreign nations was expressly given, and actually exercised.

The sense entertained by Congress of the obligation of treaties, is manifested by the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted on the 21st of March, 1787.

"Resolved, That the legislatures of the several states cannot of right pass any act or acts for interpreting, explaining or construing a national treaty, or any part or clause of it; nor for restraining, limiting, or in any manner impeding, retarding, or counteracting the operation and execution of the same; for that on being constitutionally made, ratified and published, they become in virtue of the confederation, part of the law of the land, and are not only independent of the power and will of such legislatures, but also binding and obligatory on them."

On the 13th of April, 1787, a circular letter to the States was unanimously agreed to in Congress, in which the principles of the resolution before recited, are fully demonstrated. The documents annexed to Mr. Jefferson's letter to Mr. Hammond, dated the 29th of May, 1792, shew that the States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Delaware, Maryland and North Carolina, passed laws in compliance with the resolution of Congress, and that New Jersey and Pennsylvania declared that no law existed with them, contrary to the treaty with Great Britain. It also appears that respectable official characters in several of the States declared that the principles set forth in the resolution of Congress had been generally recognized. Among these authorities that of Mr. Monroe deserves notice, especially as the representatives of Virginia strenuously contend at present, for the claim asserted in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Jefferson's opinion of the obligation of treaties and of the general sense of the States, is most decidedly expressed in the letter before referred to. His words are, that the resolution of Congress of March 21st, 1787, requiring a repeal of all acts contrary to the treaty of peace, and the proceedings of the States thereupon, were acts of supererogation, that "requiring such a repeal was only to take away pretext; that it was at all times perfectly understood that treaties *controlled* the laws of States, the confederation having made them obligatory to the whole; Congress having so declared and demonstrated them; the Legislatures and Executives of most of the States having admitted it; and the judiciaries of the separate state governments so deciding."

These facts will, it is believed, warrant the following conclusions:

1st. That it was the general sense of the people of this country, that the power of making treaties vested in Congress by the Articles of Confederation, was capable of controlling the legislative powers which then existed in the United States.

2d. That treaties constitutionally made, ratified and published, possessed in virtue of their own authority, the force and obligation of *laws*.

3d. That embarrassments having been experienced in consequence of the non-execution of the treaty of peace, the convention which formed the Constitution, must have intended such an organization and deposite of power of making treaties, as would render its exercise at once safe and efficacious.

A summary view of the structure of the government proposed by the convention, and of the distribution of its powers, is next proposed.

All legislative powers granted to the general government are declared to be to be vested in a Congress, which Congress is to consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

The general powers of Congress are given or to be deduced from a construction of the eighth, ninth and tenth sections of the first article. Some powers are indeed given by other articles, but they are not of a nature to require consideration at this time. The eighth section defines certain objects over which *Congress* shall have power, but the design of this definition was clearly nothing more than to discriminate between the powers of legislation which were to be exercised by the General Government, and those which were to remain in the State Governments. The ninth section contains a denial of some powers, not proper to be exercised, and limitations upon others vested in Congress by the preceding section. The main design of the section was clearly to prevent the assumption of certain powers by implication, and accurately to define others which had been granted in general terms. The tenth section contains a denial of some powers to the respective States, and limitations upon others. The prevention of disputes respecting a supposed concurrent jurisdiction over objects, the regulation of which it was intended to confide exclusively to the General Government, was a principal inducement in framing this section. An analytical view of these sections therefore proves that the great object of that part of the Constitution which defines the legislative powers, was to fix the limits of jurisdiction between the General and the State Governments. The distribution of power between the Departments of General Government is to be found by a very different course of inquiry.

As, however, it is asserted that the Executive department cannot, without the concurrence of Congress, definitively make treaties which limit or contract the objects of legislation, it may be proper to enquire how far Congress possesses exclusive jurisdiction over objects clearly within their sphere of authority.

The power of raising revenue is one of the most important possessed by Government, yet this may be exercised indefinitely over most objects, both by the General and State Governments. The fact is more generally true than otherwise, that where there are no words which give exclusive jurisdiction, this jurisdiction is concurrent. As some very important powers vested in Congress are in fact concurrent with the State Governments, it does not follow either from the reason of the definition of the powers vested in Congress, or the strict letter of the Constitution but that other powers may be concurrent with particular departments of the General Government.

The second article of the Constitution declares that the executive power of the government shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. In the specification of executive powers, that of making treaties is expressly mentioned, but this power like most others, is subject to the control or negative voice of the Senate; that is, a treaty cannot be valid unless it be made by the President, by and with the advice and consent of two thirds of the Senators present. In other words, the President in respect to treaties, is to initiate or perform an inchoative act, the completion of which is reserved to the Senate. The obligations resulting from a treaty, are ascertained by the third and sixth articles of the Constitution, the former of which declares that the judicial power shall extend to treaties made under the authority of the United States, and the latter that such treaties shall be the supreme law of the land.

Here it may be asked, what are treaties? The answer is, that they are compacts between sovereign and independent states, originating in free consent, and deriving their obligation from the plighted faith of one nation to another. Their objects are relative to peace, war, commerce and security. The power of making treaties, is the power of pledging the faith of one nation to another. This power is by the Constitution, expressly committed to the President, subject to the control of the Senate. The obligations arising from public faith, when pledged by the representative organ of our nation in all foreign concerns, agreeably to the mode prescribed by the Constitution, are justly and properly declared to be *laws;* the legislative power is bound not to contravene them; on the contrary, it is bound to regard and give them effect. If to omit the exercise of the power committed to any branch of the government would be to annul a treaty, such an omission would be a violation of the Constitution in that branch which refused to act.

An attempt was made in the House of Representatives in the course of the debate upon the resolution now under consideration, to distinguish between the effect of a treaty upon a law of a State and a law of the United States. There appears however, to be no ground for any distinction. In the first place it may be observed, that as all national and external concerns are under the management of the General Government, the laws of the particular States will hereafter rarely furnish subjects of complaint to foreign nations, and of course rarely be affected by treaties. To confine the local operation of treaties merely to a correction or repeal of State laws, would be in fact nearly tantamount to a declaration that no treaty was binding until confirmed by an act of Congress. Secondly. All treaties must of necessity operate either to change or confirm the existing and legal state of things. In either case the power of legislation must be abridged or directly controlled. The power of Congress to legislate, is as effectually limited by the want of a power to *repeal* as to *enact* laws. The legislative power cannot therefore, for this reason, afford a reasonable limitation upon the power of making treaties. Thirdly. A power of making peace cannot be exercised by treaty without repealing an act for declaring war. If therefore, the power of making treaties, exercised in its most simple form, implies of necessity, the power of repealing a pre-existing law, there ceases to be any criterion for determining what laws may, and what laws may not be repealed.

It has been enquired, if treaties possess the power of repealing laws, what are the limits which restrain the President and Senate from absorbing all the powers of the legislature? To this it may be answered, that the power of making treaties must of necessity be indefinite. It must be competent to the adjustment of any disputes with a foreign nation under any circumstances. That the power is indefinite is however no proof, that it is not fully vested solely in the President and Senate; that it is capable of abuse is no argument, that the House of Representatives possess a controlling authority. Many of the powers vested in Congress are also indefinite. There are no other restraints upon the powers of declaring war, of raising armies, equipping navies, and of taxation, except the virtue and discretion of Congress. It is possible to conceive that Congress may declare war unjustly, may raise armies and equip navies for purposes of ambition,

and may tax immoderately and unwisely. It is also possible to conceive that the President may make, and the Senate consent to an unwise treaty; but neither supposition is any proof that the powers are not vested. Nor are the evils which result from the abuse of authority to be entirely guarded against by human wisdom. The greatest abuses may happen under the most restricted forms of government which have been yet devised. But though treaties made by the President and Senate, have the force and obligation of laws in the United States, it is conceived that they are entitled to no precedence over acts of Congress. The House of Representatives has at any time a power to originate a bill for declaring war, or for doing any other act consistent with a treaty, and an act declaring a treaty to be void would repeal its legal obligations, and afford evidence that the contract was at an end.

In discussing propositions which are at variance with treaties, the legislature are under no peculiar restrictions; they are always bound to regard the obligations of justice, morality and good faith, and their decisions are ever in contemplation of law, presumed to be consistent with these obligations. It is not therefore true, as has been said, that treaties cannot repeal laws, and that laws cannot repeal treaties. The reverse is true. Statutes and treaties of the United States are alike supreme laws of the land, and the last act of whichever description, will control the former.

It is not intended to assert that treaties can extend to every object of legislation. There is no doubt that the forms of the Constitution, and the powers of the different departments and organs of government, are superior to the influence of a treaty. The limitation of the power of making treaties may in some respects be difficult, as the exigencies of society cannot be foreseen; but in respect to matters of mere internal concern, there appears to be nothing upon which the power of making treaties can operate in derogation, or extension of the power of legislation.

It being assumed as a consequence of the preceding remarks, that treaties are laws, and that the power of making treaties is exclusively vested in the President and Senate, it becomes proper to enquire, why this power was so deposited. To this question it may be replied, that secrecy and despatch are frequently requisite to the successful negotiation of treaties. There being no ground to expect these qualities in a numerous public body, the executive department was of course considered as the only proper deposite for this power. Assuming therefore as a position, that the constitution contemplated the necessity of secrecy and personal confidence in executive proceedings, it is the right of the President so to administer the government as to preserve its principles inviolate. The resolution of the House of Representatives appears to consider the right of reserving public documents, as extending only to such as relate to pending negotiations. There is however no ground for this distinction. In respect to treaties already completed, there may, and probably do exist, many particulars on which good faith and prudence require the observance of secrecy; at any rate, the probability of such cases renders it proper that the maxims of administration should have reference to their existence.

The propriety of a call for papers is moreover rendered doubtful, by the duty

enjoined upon the President by the constitution, to give to Congress information from time to time of the State of the Union, and to recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient. It may be fairly understood to be the sense of the constitution, that the President's declaration of a state of facts, is a sufficient ground for the proceedings of Congress; at any rate, the presumption ought always to be, that every department will discharge its duty. Except when an impeachment is proposed and a formal enquiry instituted, I am of opinion that the House of Representatives has no right to demand papers relating to foreign negotiations, either pending or completed.

Whether a compliance with the present call be expedient, under the peculiar circumstances of the treaty with Great Britain, is a question which admits of distinct considerations. A compliance, considering the protracted debates which preceded the resolution, and in which the right of the House to control treaties was asserted, would too much bear an appearance of concession to principles subversive of the just powers of the President and Senate. On the other hand, a refusal would furnish some pretext for unjust imputations against the executive department, and the negotiation of the treaty. If there was reason to believe that a refusal would diminish the public confidence in the government, this would be a powerful argument in favour of a compliance. It is however to be remembered, that the public confidence may be as certainly destroyed by a submission to improper demands, as by a conduct tending to inspire jealousy. That the public jealousy can be excited to any considerable degree is not probable. It is known to the world that Mr. Randolph was acquainted with the whole course of the negotiation, and that his malignity would prompt him to disclose any measures which could embarrass the Executive, will not be doubted. All the correspondence was submitted to the Senate, and is admitted to have been seen by many members of the House. The knowledge of what the papers contain has therefore become too general, to admit of the propagation of an opinion, that the President or the negotiator would be affected by a mere formal disclosure. The public would therefore in my opinion attribute a refusal on the part of the President to its proper motive, a determination to support the constitution. For these reasons and others, which I have not time to add, it appears to me inexpedient to comply with the call of the House. If the President shall determine not to comply with the resolution, his message may contain the following sentiments, which it is believed will justify his decision.

That the President has considered the resolution of the House of Representatives, passed on the 24th instant, with all that attention and respect which is justly due to a request of the House, and to the importance of a question which in its consequences may affect the constitution, and that a sense of duty to the public requires him to communicate the result of his reflections.

That the constitution has assigned to each department of the government distinct powers, and that as every department is equally bound by the constitution, it is reasonable that in the regular exercise of its proper duties, each should receive from the other a proper share of trust and confidence; that the true interests of the people not only require vigilance and fidelity from all parts of the administration, but also requires that the powers which have been delegated to

the government should be exercised in the mode, and by the organs designated by the constitution.

That among the powers delegated to the government of the United States, is that of making treaties, and that treaties made in pursuance of the constitution possess the validity and obligation of laws of the land.

That the power of making treaties is, by the constitution, solely vested in the President and Senate of the United States, and that in the distribution of this power between the President and Senate, it is conceived that the right of instituting negotiations, of instructing ministers and of making or receiving propositions which are to form the basis of treaties, rests exclusively with the President; that the right of approving or rejecting, in whole or in part, all proposals respecting treaties, rests exclusively with the Senate; and that the concurrent assent of the President and Senate agreeably to the constitution, with a subsequent ratification of the parties concerned, and a promulgation according to law, definitively fix the obligation of a treaty upon the United States.

That in the exercise of the duties committed to the President, secresy and personal confidence are sometimes essential, and that a regard to the public interests and to the obligations of good faith, will not always permit a full disclosure of all documents connected with foreign negotiations.

That for these reasons, and to avoid the consequences of a precedent which would embarrass future intercourse with foreign nations, the President has considered it to be his duty to withhold a compliance with the resolution of the House.

In addition to the above observations, it may perhaps be proper to state, that all the communications from the Minister of the United States were laid before the Senate for their information."

The answer of the President was returned on the 30th. "The terms," says his biographer, "in which this decided, and as it would seem, unexpected negative to the call for papers was conveyed, appeared to break the last chord of that attachment which had heretofore bound some of the active leaders of the opposition to the person of the President." [a]

The message was referred to a committee of the whole, and after a heated debate a series of resolutions were passed, affirming the ground previously taken by the opposition. An attempt was made by the federalists to include this with other treaties at this time communicated, in a resolution declaring that provision ought to be made

[a] V. Marshall, p. 562.

by law for carrying them into effect; which however failed, the opposition succeeding in confining the issue to the Spanish treaty. This having passed, and similar ones respecting the treaties with Algiers and with the north-western Indians, the question came up on the British treaty alone. Of this final debate Chief Justice Marshall thus speaks: "at no time perhaps had the members of the national legislature been stimulated to great exertions by stronger feelings than impelled them on this occasion. Never had a greater display been made of argument, of eloquence, and of passion, and never had a subject been discussed in which all classes of their fellow-citizens took greater interest."[a] The warmth displayed in Congress was indeed fully equalled by that of the country at large. The most strenuous efforts were made by both parties to produce effect on the popular mind, and happily for the nation, reason once more triumphed. The misconceptions relative to the treaty being explained, and many of the arguments against it being removed on a full and public discussion, it became evident that a majority of the people were in favor of its ratification. This did not fail to produce its effect on their representatives, and the resolution was passed in committee by the casting vote of the speaker, and in the House by a majority of three.[b] What Ames had termed "the sober second thought of the people," became "law."[c]

During the pendency of this question in the House, a case arose which threatened still more to endanger its passage. The Indian treaty of August 3d, 1795, contained a stipulation repugnant to that provision of the treaty with England, securing to the two countries the mutual enjoyment of the trade with the Indians, in their contiguous territories on the continent. Against this article, Mr.

[a] V. Marshall, p. 562.

[b] It was on this occasion that Mr. Ames' noble speech was delivered, a speech, the effect of which was such, that the majority, fearful of the question under its influence, adjourned at its conclusion.

[c] Speech on Biennial Elections.—Ames' Works, p. 24.

Bond, the British Chargé, was instructed to remonstrate, and his communication, received on the 26th of March, considerably embarrassed the government. In the beginning of May, Mr. Pickering was empowered to agree to an explanatory article, providing that no stipulation contained in the Indian treaty should derogate from the rights secured by the prior one with Great Britain. This was concluded and ratified by the Senate. A reference to the affair will be found in the letter of April 29th, to Mr. Hamilton.

Of the merits of Mr. Jay's treaty, Wolcott's opinion may be gathered from his letters. He considered that it secured some important advantages; that while it passed over in silence some points desirable to be gained, it relinquished no rights without compensation, and left the national honor untarnished; that we could, in our then defenceless state compel no better terms from Great Britain; and finally, that it was the last hope of saving us from a war equally ruinous to our commercial, and fatal to our political interests. As to the question of the right of Congress to refuse at its discretion to carry into effect a treaty in cases where its action is necessary, it is sufficient to say that the doctrine maintained by the anti-federalists on this occasion, although declared by a considerable majority in the house, and affirmed by high authority out of it, may now be considered as obsolete. Opportunities have been frequently offered by subsequent treaties, particularly that with France in 1803, and those with the Indian tribes, but it has never been revived; and it is well worthy of remark, that the same Edward Livingston who led the opposition in the winter of 1795—96, found no difficulty in sustaining the contrary side of the question when, in 1831, he negotiated the treaty with France.[a]

[a] Dwight's "Character of Jefferson," p. 123.

Of the other treaties a few words will be sufficient. That with Spain secured the boundary as claimed by the United States, and the navigation of the Mississippi. In executing their stipulations, however, the Spanish government afterwards showed but little good faith. A peace was made with France in about a month after its conclusion, which of course rendered the influence of the republic supreme in the Spanish councils, an influence speedily directed to our embarrassment. The treaty with Algiers was more exceptionable, as it stipulated among other things the payment of an annual tribute as the price of peace. Other nations and those more powerful in a maritime sense, had, it is true, submitted to the same exactions, but the humiliation was at most only diminished by the fact. Without a naval force to protect itself, it could not however be expected that a commercial nation would escape the depredations of one professedly piratical, nor, as it was abundantly shown, of those who found occasional piracy convenient.

The following letters will convey an idea of the proceedings during the remainder of the session.

JONATHAN TRUMBULL TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, 9th March, 1796.

Sir,

I presume that you will soon be acquainted in some other way than from me, that Mr. Ellsworth has accepted an appointment as Chief Justice of the United States, whereby he has vacated his seat in the Senate of the United States. I give you this early information, that you may be revolving in your mind the steps which may be necessary to be taken by the state to supply the vacancy, whether by an immediate executive appointment, or whether it may be convenient to wait the approaching meeting of the legislature. On this question it is not perhaps for me to give an opinion; I will beg the liberty, however, just to mention, that as respects the probable great events of the present session, we are very differently, I might say more favourably circumstanced in the Senate, than they are in the House of Representatives. In the Senate, the treaty majority is still strong, in the House I fear it is quite otherwise.

You will please pardon me, sir, for going so far as I have done towards an

opinion, and believe me to be, with very great regard and respect, sir, your obedient and humble servant,

JONA. TRUMBULL.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, March, 1796.

Congress have presented a singular spectacle during the present session. Three months have elapsed and almost nothing has been done and nothing matured. The majority are of the ill-natured class; the care of the friends of the government is therefore to prevent mischief, there being but little expectation that much good can be accomplished.

The treaty with Great Britain has been proclaimed, and will be carried into execution so far as depends on the Executive. A treaty with Spain has just passed the Senate, but I suppose that it must wait the ratification of the Catholic majority before it can be published officially. The navigation of the Mississippi and a free port at New Orleans (free of duties) have been obtained. The boundary claimed by us is recognized by Spain, and is to be marked by commissioners; the spoliations upon our commerce are to be settled by commissioners, who are to meet at Philadelphia; the commerce with Spain is put on the footing of the most favoured nation, but no admission is allowed into the Spanish colonies. This treaty, though a good one, is liable to the constitutional objections which have been raised against that with Great Britain. It "defines piracy," as is said by the opposers of the British treaty; it "regulates trade;" it "adjusts boundary;" it requires the "expenditure of money" for which there is no appropriation; and what is worst of all, it repeals in a small degree an act of Congress. It is not true that it clashes with the British treaty, as has been asserted in Bache's paper. The treaty with Algiers will be grateful, as it restores the prisoners and is good in its kind. Owing to our defenceless situation it will prove enormously expensive, and probably cost $800,000, besides an annual tribute of about $24,000. This, in the money particular, is also unconstitutional on the principles of the objectors to the British treaty. Matters are now in such a train that all the treaties must be swallowed by the Virginians, or their factious designs be fully disclosed. It is uncertain whether they will not venture to precipitate the country into the confusions which would result from a non-compliance; but if they do, the government will be at an end. At any rate there will be a serious struggle, and no adjournment will be allowed till this matter is finally settled.

Mr. Ellsworth has been appointed Chief Justice.[a] I do not even conjecture who will be his successor, but I presume no appointment will be thought necessary till May, the Senate being sufficiently strong and united.

The business of my department, so far as depends on executive administration, is, I am certain, in good order; but I am not sure of proper support from the

[a] Mr. Rutledge's resignation was not confirmed by the Senate, and Mr. Cushing, who was next nominated, declined the appointment.

present House of Representatives. If anything ill happens, I shall not be answerable for it. I mention this for your satisfaction, as you must feel interested for my character in these contentious times. I am more and more confident of the danger which exists, that the House of Representatives will finally be found too strong for the Executive, but the government will not yet be betrayed. For some time, what is essentially necessary will be done, if we can but settle the dispute about the treaty. This is well understood by both parties, and hence their zeal on the occasion.

## OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen., TO JONATHAN TRUMBULL.

Litchfield, 14th March, 1796.

Sir,

Your letter of the 9th instant, announcing the appointment of Mr. Ellsworth to the office of Chief Justice of the United States, and the consequent vacancy of his seat in Congress, has been duly received. The session of Congress has considerably advanced ; the business which will be before the Senate will be in safe hands ; therefore no anticipation will be made in the appointment of a Senator, but the subject referred to the next session of the legislature. Mr. Ellsworth's appointment will be very satisfactory to all who are willing to be pleased. If our country shall be preserved from anarchy and confusion, it must be by men of his character. I hope that the session of Congress will be continued until it shall be indubitably ascertained whether there is a latent constitutional power in some part of Congress, which can defeat a national treaty made by a power especially constituted for that purpose, and ratified with all the solemnities requisite to give it effect ; and which has also become the supreme law of the land. The full discovery of such a lurking power, if any such exists, will be a desideratum which the publick have a right to be gratified with the full view of ; and indeed the nations of the world have a right to know of the existence of such a rare curiosity, that so far as they may be affected by it, they may govern themselves accordingly. With much respect and esteem, I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Litchfield, March 21st, 1796.

Sir,

* * * * To appoint a Senator to supply the place of Mr. Ellsworth, I neither think necessary nor expedient till the General Assembly shall meet. The established principles and abilities of Mr. Ellsworth render his appointment proper.

The progress of business in the House of Representatives gives but little satisfaction to my acquaintance, though it is such as was expected. The President, it seems, is to be called upon to exhibit the course of negotiation relative to the British treaty. In this I devoutly hope that they will not be gratified. I think

that such usurpation and encroachment will be resisted in the first instance, and that these men will be obliged to exhibit themselves in all their deformity. Let them, if they dare, decide upon the merits of the treaty; if they consider themselves competent to decide; the treaty is the only object. Their base view is to confound the negotiation with the treaty, and to exhibit to the publick any perplexities which might attend the business, so as to cloak their own motive in not giving it support. These men must have great confidence in the stupidity of their constituents, to hope to elude the subject in this manner. I shall extremely regret, if their request shall be gratified. Let them come out boldly and say, we will not provide for carrying the treaty into effect, because we dislike it, and because it is attended with expense, and because it respects commerce. The most ignorant will then know what their claims are, and compare them with the constitution. These men will not be able, under the specious garb of their being the representatives of the people, to conceal their usurpation and hypocrisy.

I have ever considered the national constitution as a matter of experiment—excellent, if conducted by sensible and honest men—but the vilest of men will frequently gain a popular ascendancy, and many weak men will always be in all popular assemblies; but I had no apprehension that our system of government would be so soon threatened as it is at present. This must in some measure be owing to the zealous friendship of the French, who wish to see us disorganized that we might be more impressible to their councils. Indeed, there is not a maritime government in Europe, but what wish to see us in that wretched condition; and there are sagacious idiots enough in America, who are forward to help them in their designs. Our constitution appears to me to be rapidly tending to operate substantially upon the principles of the old confederation; and if so, disorganization may be expected to follow, and the states who precipitate the event will, I believe, be left to themselves, and will be gratified by becoming provinces of France; but I will hope that the Providence which has in a manner almost miraculous, hitherto preserved us, will still be extended to us. There may be reasons which do not occur to my mind, for opening a land office. The value of such sales can be but imperfectly known. Such emigration through all the western world, cannot but greatly impoverish the old settlements; by such sparse settlements the people become ignorant, savage, and ungovernable.

My kindest regards to all my friends and connections with you, and to yourself. I am, &c.

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, March 26th, 1796.

Sir,

Since my last letter, one from you has been received. Its date I cannot note, as it is at my chamber, and I write in Congress Hall.

Mr. Livingston's motion has undergone a very animated discussion, and finally been carried as was expected by a great majority. Sixty-two in the affirmative,

and thirty-seven in the negative. The President's sentiments as yet are unknown in respect to an answer. The Connecticut delegation have taken an active part in the resistance given to this violation of the constitution ; and if an error has been made in the degree of opposition, or in the opposition itself, they must largely participate. All of us spoke on the subject, except Mr. Swift, and he was prevented by the abrupt and almost violent manner in which the committee closed the debate. Mr. Hillhouse was not perfectly satisfied of the expediency of our opposition, nor of some of the principles we maintained. This is, however, to be considered as one of those shades in sentiments we must expect. His conduct is firm and decided. My esteem for all the gentlemen is every day increased ; and it will give you particular pleasure to be told our relation, Mr. Griswold, is one of the most able and worthy of men. There is no duty he will not be found adequate to, nor any one from which he will shrink. On this question we trust the opinion in Connecticut will be correct. The importance to the government can only be estimated by those who know the difficulties we have to encounter. We believe we shall execute the treaties. I doubt not the vacancies in the important offices of the state will be judiciously filled, as every reflecting man must see the danger of the crisis we are verging upon.

I have received two letters from Frederic, one enclosing some U. S. paper. Excuse the abruptness with which I subscribe myself, your obedient servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN., TO OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

LITCHFIELD, March 29, 1796.

Sir,

I have been duly honored with your letter of the 8th instant, giving information of your having accepted an office in the judiciary, and of the consequent vacancy of your seat in Congress as a Senator from this State. I doubt not but that the State would very reluctantly part with your services under their immediate appointment, but upon the conviction that they will be rendered more extensively useful by your discharging the duties of the very important office to which you are appointed.

I am happy to know that amicable settlements have been made with nations with whom we have had differences. The convention with the Barbary States is indeed truly humiliating, but the greatest naval powers in Europe have long submitted to a similar degradation from those piratical people, who, it seems cannot be conquered, and from whom nothing can be got.

Accept, sir, my sincere wishes that your present appointment may be as agreeable to yourself, as, I doubt not it will be useful to your country. With great esteem and regard, I am sir, your most ob't humble serv't,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, April 1, 1796.

Sir,

Imagining you will be much pleased with the President's message communicating his reasons for a denial of the papers, I do myself the pleasure to enclose a paper that contains it. This act on his part, entitles him to additional confidence and attachment from our country, and I sincerely pray it may inspire sentiments corresponding with the correctness of the step.

As the message came to the House yesterday, no opinion as yet, can be formed of the probable effects on the temper of the majority. You need not be informed, that never was any communication less palatable to them than this. Some of their leaders will endeavor to avail themselves of the denial of papers, as an apology for non-execution of the treaty. I still believe the whole party cannot be persuaded to go with them. One principle must be inculcated, that however important the treaties are, they are not of sufficient importance to claim the prostration of the executive to the legislative. Our affairs are critical; the friends of the government will not be wanting in firmness, and I hope not in prudence, to carry us through this tempest.

I learn with much pleasure the prospect of the establishment of the officers of our State, with more unanimity than was at first expected; its weight in the Union cannot be too highly estimated nor too carefully preserved.

No conjecture can be made when the session will end; our business awaits the eventual determination on the treaty. If the Senate suffer Congress to rise till all the important business is done, they will essentially desert the interests of their country. My opinion is that no adjournment will be suffered till the treaties shall be executed. But no mention of it is at present to be made.

We are in health, and send you our respectful sentiments of affection. I am, sir, your humble and ob't servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, April 9, 1796.

Sir,

By several of the last mails we are assured of a visit from Col. Wadsworth within a few days; on advising with him, we shall be able to return a direct answer to your last favour. Our letters from Connecticut apprise us of a prevailing sentiment that Mr. Trumbull will be chosen Lieutenant Governor, and his friends with us depend on his acceptance. The newspaper I enclose, gives you the occurrences of the day, and the "Censor," a work by Peter Porcupine, administers his monthly correction to our disorganizers. The author is said to be an Englishman who has kept a school in this city.[a]

We still continue in a state of disgust and anxiety. The prospect of the public business being saved from wreck, has not diminished. The western part of

[a] William Cobbett.

this State are petitioning for the treaties. I am told if Findley and Gallatin don't ultimately vote for their execution, their lives will scarcely be spared. New Jersey is becoming electrical, and expresses no small indignation against the pusillanimous conduct of some of their members. Our Speaker is evidently alarmed.

Probably the resolves passed by the House on the President's message, have come to you. The majority have the baseness to say, that the President entirely misconceived their ideas on the treaty power. Their resolutions are purposely vague. We early determined to vote against any abstract resolves explanatory of the Constitution, and treat with silent indignation, all their speeches on the message. After a jesuitical speech from Madison, we had the good fortune to close the business.

Though not officially communicated, we know that Mr. Bond's orders from his court direct the surrender of the posts the 1st June, on condition that the House of Representatives evince an honest intention of executing the treaty; and otherwise to forbear. An officer waits to convey despatches to the British commanders, so that we have only about twenty days to accomplish the business, and every subterfuge the will of man can use, will be practiced to create delay and embroil us on irritating questions once more with England. Many of my congressional friends despair of ultimate success; I confidently trust we shall yet in season, despatch this interesting matter satisfactorily.

All your connexions are in health except Mrs. Goodrich, who for a few days has been slightly indisposed with a cold. The intelligence of the eventual conduct of the British Court as to the posts, is no otherwise confidential, than I would not wish it to get into our papers. I am, sir, with sentiments of affection and respect, your ob't humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, April 12th, 1796.

Sir,

Since my last, some circumstances have transpired indicative of a determinate design on the part of the leaders of the majority to defeat the treaty. The message of the President has had no effect to change opinion. In case they have the hardiness to take this step, we are to expect a vigorous onset to change our government, and for that purpose to make Jefferson President, and Burr Vice President.

I have been more confident than my congressional friends of our ultimate success, and still trust that will be the case. Our affairs are very critical, and become daily more darkened. No circumstance could have been more unfortunate than the British impressment of seamen. There is a mystery in the business we can't fathom. What can induce them to cripple the vessels carrying them provisions and horses under contract is unknown. I hope however that the people will continue temperate till this evil can be remedied. Mr. Livingston's bill for protection of seamen, is very defective, exposing a numerous class now in our service, and placing the United States on very dangerous ground. The merchants here and at New York disapprove of it. I hope it will be amended by the Senate. In haste, your obedient and humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

PHILADELPHIA, April 18th, 1796.

I have received your letter of March 21st. The issue of the debate upon the call for papers, and the President's reply, will, I know, give you satisfaction. At present the house are debating a resolution for appropriating money for the British Treaty. This will be lost. Mr. Madison has come out decidedly in opposition, and with Giles and Gallatin, will risk all consequences; how far the party will follow is uncertain. After the present motion shall have failed, a resolution which has been moved by Mr. McClay of this State, will be taken up. This proposes that the House should declare that it is inexpedient to give effect to the British Treaty, because they have not the papers to inform them of the necessity of the sacrifices contained in it, and because the British continue to take our vessels and impress our seamen. The design of this affirmative declaration against the treaty is to ensnare weak men, by committing them upon principles from which they cannot consistently recede, to alarm the British government and to set the privateers upon our commerce under an expectation of war. The leaders of the party know that the British government does not conceive the treaty to be any great boon, and that unless we execute, they will not. They also know that by defeating the treaty, losses and injuries will happen, which will renew the animosities between us and Great Britain, and by which they shall profit. French intrigue has also much to do with this business. The minority in the House will give a decided opposition to Mr. McClay's motion, and the Senate will, I presume, combine all the treaties together and insist that they shall share one fate. Perhaps this combination of the treaties will divide the party. If it does not, we must wait for the operation of public opinion upon the House; if this last resource fails, the government fails, and we must commence *de novo*.

I believe there never was a public body deserved less the public confidence; who were more ignorant, vain and incompetent, than the majority of the present House of Representatives. The whole session has been a disgraceful squabble for power, and a display of unworthy passions. Mr. Gallatin evidently leads in all measures, and it is neither unreasonable nor uncandid to believe that Mr. Gallatin is directed by foreign politics and influence.

I understand from all quarters that you will succeed to the office of Governor. At this I rejoice, as it is proper in itself, and as it is a proof of the stability and gratitude of the people of the state. Mr. Trumbull, it is said, will be chosen Lt. Governor; this is also well, except that it will take a good man from the Senate. It appears to me to be important that the good old habits of Connecticut should be maintained. Among those habits, that of promoting men in a regular gradation is one of the best. This principle will, I think, have its influence on the appointment of senators. All the members of the old Connecticut representation have acquitted themselves well; there is therefore, no principle upon which a preference can be made among them except talents and seniority. In respect to talents, there will always be great differences among men; but nothing is so dis-

agreeable as comparisons of this nature. Seniority in office being a matter of chance, furnishes a ground for discrimination which is not offensive, and where there are not solid objections against admitting it as a rule of promotion, it ought, in my opinion, to be followed.

As the legislature of Connecticut have never yet meddled with the affairs of the general government, perhaps they ought not to do it on the present occasion. The firmness of the state is not doubted here, and not one commands more respect.

The preceeding letter makes mention of Mr. Madison's hostility to the treaty with England. The position now occupied by that gentleman seems to require a notice in passing.

Since the publication of Mr. Jefferson's correspondence has exposed to the world his duplicity and worthlessness, anti-federalism has sought in the supposed purity of Mr. Madison, a redemption from the sins of its original chief.

When, indignant at its pretensions to exclusive virtue, and disgusted at its real exhibitions of corruption, the federalists have held up the self drawn portrait of its great representative to public odium and contempt; the more sagacious of his followers, confessing the repulsiveness of his moral features, have pointed to his friend as one at least whose career was immaculate. Uninformed and misinformed men, even of the opposite ranks, have by tacit assent or feeble denial admitted the justice and truth of the claim; but so did not the federal cotemporaries of Mr. Madison. They saw in him one doubly guilty, because sinning against the light that was in him; twice culpable, because untrue to his real convictions. They saw in him the renegade to his party and his faith, the man who having grown to mature age and gained his first laurels in their ranks, abandoned his principles, surrendered his independence to the will of another, and united his talents and his influence to break down the system he had aided in establishing. In the federal convention he had stood side by side with Hamilton, battling for the Constitution; in that of Virginia he had met al-

most single handed the eloquence of Patrick Henry; he stood before the world as a distinguished co-author of the great creed of our national faith, the essays of "The Federalist;" the first session of the first congress had found him in the extreme right of the government party and even exceeding in zeal the limits of their wiser discretion, and he was known even, to have favored most of the leading features of the funding system, the great bone of political contention. But as the Virginia party under the management of Mr. Jefferson, gradually formed itself and drew round it the scattered elements of opposition, Mr. Madison was seen passing over to its ranks. The cautiousness which formed part of his character, may have indeed for a time withheld him, where before notoriously committed; but no sooner was that faction matured in its plans, than throwing off the mask, he showed himself the reckless opponent of all he had once contended for. His insidious resolutions founded on Jefferson's report, and his course in regard to the treaty, set the seal upon his apostacy; they lost him the remaining confidence of Washington, and the friendship of those who had hoped for better things. Thenceforward the anti-federalists had no more ardent or more unscrupulous champion.

FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

New York, April 20, 1796.

I have received your letter of the 18th instant. The money sent me shall be placed to your credit in the office of discount and deposit as you desire. The British ministry are as great fools, or as great rascals as our Jacobins, else our commerce would not continue to be embarrassed as it now is by the new proposition. Not knowing the precise form of that proposition, I cannot have an opinion of what is right on the part of the Executive; but if I understand it, it ought to be sufficient for the Executive to declare that the article in the treaty with the Indians can never operate nor will be permitted to operate in contravention of the treaty with Great Britain. It relates to a right reserved for our benefit which we can and will waive, and being in a treaty of subsequent date, it naturally gives way to another of prior date, with which it is inconsistent.

The Executive ought to be careful about admitting the propriety of a new condition, though it ought to be ready to give all due satisfaction. It should not even refuse a new explanatory article, if reasonable in itself, but should agree to it upon the strength of its own reasonableness, not as a new condition foreign to the treaty. This affair requires great caution. But as I said, I do not know enough to give advice worth much.

Yet the government must take care not to appear pusillanimous. I hope *a very serious* remonstrance has long since gone against the wanton impressment of our seamen. It will be an error to be too tame with this overbearing cabinet.

Our city is in motion against the plan of the majority in the House of Representatives, with regard to the treaty. The current appears to be strong with us. The papers will tell you the measures in contemplation. But I was sorry to learn that a *proper, qualified* communication was not made to the House of Representatives of the late communication from the British agent. The Executive may hereafter be blamed for withholding so important a fact. Yet, not knowing the whole affair, I cannot well judge on this point more than on the other. Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, April 20, 1796.

Sir,

As yet, no change of conduct is discoverable in any of the majority of the House of Representatives, either from the debate or private conversation. A plurality of eight votes at present is counted on against an appropriation for the treaty. What impression the serious alarm excited in this and the city of New York will produce, cannot be foreseen. The petition in favour of the execution of the treaty, will be generally, if not universally signed by persons of worth and property. A counter one, it is apprehended, would command as many names. Thousands of people reside here who have no interests in the country, and are even unknown; there is no detection even of fictitious names. 'Tis probable the debate will continue some days on the resolutions before us. Mr. Livingston's resolution for an indemnification to the merchants for spoliation, is a mere gull, which his party well know the government cannot adopt. We are humiliated by the election of Austin into the Senate in Boston, and Mr. Adams as Governor. Neither perhaps, ought to be relied on as indicative of public opinion; no circumstance has given greater encouragement to the majority. People of property in Baltimore are now in sentiment with those of this city, and are framing instructions for Mr. Smith, their representative.

You may be assured of the determination of the Senate to join the appropriation for the British treaty, with some one or all the others, and inflexibly resist any appropriation for the rest, unless it be also made for that. Our greatest difficulty will be to keep our friends here; but as we don't despair of that, neither do we of eventual success. So desperate are the leaders of the party, we know they will hazard every thing. Our affairs are critical, confidence in the government is vanishing fast, and immense evil is already done.

When will the people of this country open their eyes, and despise their false guides? Will nothing but serious calamity teach them their present happy state, and the path of safety? We trust the State of Connecticut will preserve a correct and firm course of conduct. Their good sense and staid temper are greatly respected. I am, respectfully, your ob't humble serv't,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, April 23d, 1796.

Sir,

I thank you for your letter of the 18th, which has this moment come to hand.

The certain knowledge we have of the desperate determination of a majority of the House of Representatives to defeat the treaty, has induced us to risque the consequences of delay, and prolong the debates, in expectation of an impulse from some of the districts on their representatives. You will see in the papers, the proceedings of the several cities. After all, in these places it is but a strife between the opulent, and the discontented and factious at the head of the poor. What its final impression on the House will be, can't be foreseen. As yet, on the most favourable calculation, six votes are to be secured, for an execution of the treaty. It is not probable that they can be gained on the resolution before the committee; in that case, Mr. Mc Clay's resolution is likely to be brought forward, to which, I think we ought to prolong our stand as long as possible; but 'tis well known that the Senate will, as soon as a vote shall be had on the resolution before us, if unfortunate, tack an amendment providing for the British treaty, to the Spanish treaty bill, and inflexibly adhere for all or none. I am not warranted to assert, but I trust they also will arrest the federal city loan bill, land office, perhaps appropriation for the army, refuse to rise; in short, arrest the whole government, and let the people decide. The exigency of the case only can justify such perilous steps; but what can be done if the House of Representatives will not execute the government? I hope however, we shall not be forced on such extremes, and though I consider the crisis an awful one, I don't despair of extricating ourselves in season to save our ship. Few know at present, what mischiefs she has already undergone. I hope Connecticut will preserve her steady and temperate conduct.

Col. Wadsworth arrived last evening. I will write you soon, in answer to a part of a former letter. I am, with esteem, your ob't humble, servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

N. B. Some circumstances attend Mr. Bond's communication, that strongly militate against its communication in the papers.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, April 25, 1796.

Sir,

Your letter of the 18th inst. is received. The answer given to the House by the President has been extremely gratifying to every person whom I have heard

mention it, and great anxiety was felt lest it should have been given otherwise. A different answer would only have increased the difficulty, and given a deep stab to the constitution. I am most fully persuaded that the House are opposing all the good sense, and by far the greatest part of the property of America, and that they must finally sink into abhorrence and contempt; but no one can say what folly led by villainy will not do. You may, I believe, be assured that the conduct of the House has excited the most serious alarm and indignation in this part of the country, and I do not believe that any material change of opinion of Massachusetts is to be inferred by their electing Mr. Adams their Governor; he is an old and infirm man. They would not wish, at least many of them, to hazard the peace of the state by a contest, but when their legislature shall meet, I think that the same general sentiment will prevail as in their last. The resolution of the House to call for the papers was carried to Boston in fifty hours. The Chronicle was immediately published, a day sooner than usual, to promulgate the news through the state, and this at the moment of their election, which was probably a preconcerted plan.

Most interesting events must soon be ascertained. I will risk an opinion with considerable confidence, that it is the secret wish of George the Third and his ministry that the treaty may be defeated, and that there are secret orders given to irritate the Americans to induce a violation. Great Britain can collect their debts when they please. The conduct of Congress proves the impotence and distraction of our government; with such proof they will not wish to part with the western posts. They have nothing to fear from America; they can plunder our commerce at once. A respect to mercantile opinion and interest are their only restraints. The French Minister is better supplied with money than Fauchet said he was, which he distributes liberally, and the patriots of Virginia are promoting the views of the enemies of our peace, and prostrating the honour of America in the dust, with a view to bring in Jefferson as President. Whether the present tempest shall end in fume or not, I believe we are to calculate upon an early termination of our present system. The principle of government at present is to be understood as founded on the predominancy of popular faction only, and he who "*per fas aut nefas*" can engage the greatest number is to rule.

I sincerely wish that the President would not announce a wish to retire from the cares of government during the present public distraction, how great soever his wishes may be for retirement. I think it will be most for his honour at any event not to quit the helm during a storm. I am certain that it will be utterly inconsistent with our safety, and I am very certain that it is impossible for these people to dispossess him of the public confidence. It is too firmly rooted to be moved.

You will easily believe that I have not taken one step to influence the public elections of this state. It is said that I am elected to supply the place of Governor Huntington, and without opposition. Mr. Trumbull will probably have a plurality of votes for Lieutenant-Governor. * * *

Yours, &c.,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## FROM JOEL BARLOW.

ALGIERS, 27 April, 1796.

My Dear Friend,

You see I am drawn into another scrape which detains me still on this side of the Atlantic. On arriving in Paris last summer, I found that the work which I contemplated on the history of the French revolution, would detain me there till it would be too late to make the voyage that season, and as I suffer so terribly with sea sickness, I could not think of embarking for a winter passage. After this, Mr. Humphreys, thinking I might render some service to the public by coming to this place, persuaded me, much against my inclination to come, and I shall probably have more than one reason to repent of the undertaking. I found our affairs here in such a desperate state, that in order to secure a chance of doing any good, it was necessary to make engagements which are very likely to be disapproved.

If you will take the trouble of looking through what I have written to the Secretary of State on the subject, which goes by this conveyance, you will see the ground on which we now stand, and have some idea, though an imperfect one, of that on which we have stood, and you will be able to judge of the motives which guided me in the part I have taken in this transaction. I was so strongly impressed with the great advantage, and even necessity of being at peace with Barbary, that had I been sure of increasing censure, I could not in conscience act otherwise than I have done.

In my letters to the Secretary, Nos. 1, 4, and 5, I have laid before him as complete a view, as the short time I have been here has enabled me to take, of every subject connected with our interests in this quarter. What I have said with respect to placing ourselves on a friendly footing with Turkey and the states of Italy, appears to me important, and that the business ought not to be delayed. Should the Executive adopt the measure of sending a commissioner to establish treaties with those powers, I have a favour to ask of you in which you may render me a service, if you think there is no impropriety in it. It is that you would recommend me to be sent on that mission. My reason for wishing this is a very simple one, and I have no hesitation to expose it to you, though to you it may appear frivolous. My only motive that is in any way personal, is that it would give me an opportunity to see those countries. I do not wish for the appointment as a place, and I did not intend to hold one, either in or under any government. When I get to America, I intend to sit down to my books. What might be seen in such a tour would increase my little stock of knowledge, and I cannot afford to make the journey at my own expense. I should regret, indeed, that it would keep me another year from America; but I think it would be usefully employed for myself, and I will farther add, that I do not think that any person they will be likely to send, could do the business better than I, or would do it at so little expense.

But whatever may be the fate of the proposition I here make to you, I hope the general object will not be neglected. It appears to me that this measure would extend our commerce considerably in some points, and secure and facili-

tate our navigation in all. It must be done some time or other, and I think the sooner the better. I am, dear sir, with sincere attachment, your friend and servant,

JOEL BARLOW.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 29, 1796.

I have received your favour of the 20th. The affair with Bond stands thus, and is truly attended with some perplexing circumstances.

The communication states that provisional orders have been given for the surrender of the posts whenever the House of Representatives shall have indicated an intention to give effect to the treaty, and when an article shall have been negociated explanatory of the sense of the two nations, that the 8th article of our treaty with the Indians shall not derogate from the rights stipulated in favour of British subjects by the 3d article of the treaty with Great Britain. The style of the memorial is respectful, and the doubtful article in the Indian treaty is attributed to want of information on our part of the stipulation in the British treaty.

I have thought that a declaration by the Executive, that we admit the doctrine of the law of nations, ought to be sufficient, and that insisting upon an explanatory article was pressing a point rather unreasonably against us. As, however, Mr. Bond says that he is instructed to insist on an article, and as the terms can be adjusted so as completely to save the national honour, perhaps we are bound to consent. I feel, however, that the Executive ought not to have been embarrassed at present.

There being two points to settle before we obtain the posts, one concerning the Legislature and the other the Senate, it has appeared to me that a partial communication would be improper, and that a general one would be inexpedient. A message to the House would, moreover, unnecessarily stimulate the passions of the opposition. A resolution for giving effect to the treaty is under consideration. The presumption ought to be that they will do their duty. On this ground the Senate have forborne to connect a provision for the British treaty with the bills which have been sent up respecting the other treaties. The principle which has governed the Senate, if correct, requires the Executive to forbear his interference. Some difficulty may be apprehended in obtaining a ratification of the explanatory article in the present state of the Senate; but it will be surmounted.

I think the government will succeed in the present contest; but it remains doubtful whether order can be long preserved. Unless a radical change of opinion can be effected in the southern states, the existing establishments will not last eighteen months. The influence of Messrs. Gallatin, Madison and Jefferson must be diminished, or the public affairs will be brought to a stand. No proper attention is paid to the current business of the government by the House. Every thing is in the hands of the committees. Nothing is understood, and few

matters of importance in a train for being completed. Before the treaty question commenced, the treaty furnished a pretext for delay. The length of the session, and the languor of the members, will furnish another pretext after that question shall have been determined.

Mr. Patten, the postmaster, communicated to me yesterday a singular circumstance. Some time since, letters were delivered into his office for Robert Cowper and a Doctor Graham of Suffolk, in Virginia. By some means Mr. Patten discovered that these letters had been brought from Virginia ; and this, he says, induced him to suspect some mischief, and to write to Virginia. I have seen the answer which he (Patten) received from Robert Cowper, in which he says that the letter to him was signed with your name ; that to Dr. Graham with the name of Mr. Van Allen of Congress. It seems that the letters were forgeries, and contain something which, if true, might injure yours and Mr. Van Allen's character. This is doubtless some Jacobin trick. I shall try to detect it, and give you information. At present, I have no particulars.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, May 4th, 1796.

Sir,

After the anxiety and disgust you, in common with the discerning and virtuous friends of the government, have experienced in respect to an opposition to the treaty, it will give you peculiar satisfaction to learn that a bill yesterday passed, making appropriations for its execution. To increase our happiness on this occasion, the main point is not only secured, but without any marks of stigma fixed on the Executive, or its measures. The public papers I send by this mail, render any detail unnecessary. Congress will rise, probably, about the first of June. We shall probably pass the laws essential to the safety of the government ; means which are requisite for its improvement must be left for a more favourable opportunity. The members will now, one after the other be daily setting out for home. I hope the public will begin to discern that our government confides too much to private sacrifices. It costs individuals too much. Our executive establishments are not sufficiently extended in the states, and the whole texture is too weak for the stress that bears upon them. The energy of the President's popularity has not yet been estimated at one-half its value. We expect, if the circumstance of his retirement from office must be submitted to, a more federal house will succeed the present, and a chance be offered to set things more to rights. Certainly the leaders are crest fallen. They were wretchedly deceived in the firmness of the President, the spirit of the country, and the union and unbending resolution of their opposers in our House. All of these circumstances have had their perfect work ; and when the bill passed it was evident that they were as solicitous as we to end the business. One of the party, who the day before had declared his resolution to call the yeas and nays, desisted therefrom, no doubt by preconcert. The members from Virginia who opposed in the committee, voted for the bill. Mr. Hancock was with us on both questions. Varnum was accidentally out when the question was taken in commit-

tee, and voted for the bill in the House. No persons are more inveterate than Lyman, Dearborn and Smith.

We have sufficient inducements to invite our return to our firesides in Connecticut. The mortifying scenes which we have had to encounter, of themselves make me impatient to quit Congress Hall. One of the representatives from New York state informs me, his letters from the city apprise him, that though the votes have not been canvassed, there is almost a certainty of Mr. Burr's not having succeeded in the election for State Senator. I am, sir, respectfully your obedient humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, May 6, 1796.

Sir,

I am to acknowledge the favour of your two letters, received since the date of my last to you. Nothing new has happened. We receive by every mail, evidence of the determinate sense of our country for an execution of the treaty, and of the confidence of the people in the executive administration. So far as opportunity has been had in Virginia for an ascertainment of public sentiment, it appears in unison with other places. Whole counties have petitioned; and yesterday a very spirited petition or remonstrance, said to have been drawn by Gov. Lee, was read. This spirit mortifies their representatives beyond expression. It excites the chagrin of spirits doubly damned.

Yesterday a joint committee of both Houses reported for an adjournment on the 20th of this month, and a long list of business is to be completed. It is probable neither will happen; but that we may rise about the first of June. The plan of the Secretary of the Treasury will be now adopted. Yesterday the bill was read in committee of the whole, and passed to a third reading without opposition. I refer only to the plan for funding the anticipated sums borrowed of the banks, and payment to them by a stock irredeemable till 1819. If this operation had been adopted early in the session, the stock could then have been sold at or above par. The delay, and the wound to public credit, from the preposterous conduct of the House, during the session, has created some embarrassments to a successful administration of the finances. I believe they will be surmounted. An opinion seems to prevail, that it is advisable to defer an extension of the revenue system to other objects, till next session. In the present temper of the House, we cannot promise an increase of compensation to the officers of government; the present incompetency of which threatens serious evils. The best informed and disposed, as yet have no idea how much remains to perfect a system of a free and energetic government. At present we exist on the labours of our predecessors. Every exertion ought now to be pointed to form the public mind; and in case the effervescence of sansculottism in our House shall serve the valuable purpose of giving the union a more virtuous and intelligent representation, the opportunity must be improved to fix our system on a more unshaken foundation.

The opinion generally prevails, on what authority I don't know, that the President will retire on the expiration of his present term. I know he has embraced an opinion, that the effort this session is the last grasp of an expiring faction, and that the European war out of which it grows, and on which it feeds as its natural aliment, will end with the present year. I hope, but without any other ground perhaps than my own wishes, that he will still continue in office, if his expectations shall not be gratified. So far as I can learn, opinion here designates Mr. Adams as his successor, and some fit character in the southern states for Vice-President; perhaps Mr. Pinckney, now at London, or Patrick Henry of Virginia. I believe the business ought to be confided to some persons to find out, on what decided and federal character most votes can be centered. Every movement of the disorganizers evinces their electioneering zeal for Jefferson, and a total overthrow of the executive systems. Probably some are duped in the expectation of his conduct when in office. If however he does not justify their expectations, he will have a difficult part to play, and as his election can be avoided by union, we must not suffer a lukewarmness to mar our designs. It may be well to watch circumstances in Connecticut, to see if any temper peeps out there indicative of an exertion for Jefferson or Burr. Letters have been received from an unexpected quarter there, urging an execution of the treaty. The friends of the government have full right to wait for continued, long and consistent fruits of change of opinion, before they yield their entire confidence. I hope to accompany this with another, in answer to a part of a former one of yours that had been too long neglected; in case I do not it shall not be delayed longer than the ensuing mail.

Accept my sincere thanks for your letters, and be assured we shall be happy if your leisure shall serve to communicate the proceedings of your legislature. I am, respectfully, your obedient and humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## JONATHAN TRUMBULL TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, 6th May, 1796.

Sir,

Our situation in Congress has lately been so critical and alarming, that it has been feared I should have been obliged to request an immediate appointment of an additional senator from our state; but happily Providence has interposed, and our circumstances are so much altered for the better, that the necessity is now removed, and the legislature will be left to their own time to fill the vacancy. Happy indeed has been the issue of the great question on the execution of the British treaty; much happier than it might have been, had the decision come to a contest between the two branches of the legislature. Although in that event I had no doubt of the final issue, yet the division of sentiment, and perhaps animosity which might have been produced, would have been serious in their existence, and unhappy in their consequences. Much danger has been encountered from the delay in the House of Representatives, to make the necessary provisions for the British treaty, and some ill consequences are still to be apprehended,

resulting from their late opposition and hesitation, but none I hope which may not be eventually surmounted. The 1st of June is near at hand, and the final orders for the evacuation of the posts have been suspended on this issue in the House. Other points of execution on the British part have also been probably retarded by this non-executing disposition of the Representatives in Congress, but all I hope will terminate well. A new British minister is daily expected in this city from New York. What his disposition or instructions may be, must be left till his arrival. The character however which has preceded him is favourable. I hope it may prove so on trial.

Since the opposition in the House of Representatives has been broken, our business in both Houses goes on briskly and harmoniously, and it is expected that the session of Congress may be brought to a close in all this month, perhaps sooner. The 20th has been reported by a joint committee, as the day on which we may be adjourned. With much respect and esteem, I am, sir, your obedient and humble servant,

J. TRUMBULL.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, May 13, 1796.

Sir,

By this morning's mail I had the pleasure of receiving your favour of the 8th instant, and fully accord with the sentiments you express, and particularly in that of our ultimate success, in the treaty being accomplished by the President's repression of the outrageous assumption of power on the part of the House. Present defeat may learn some of the file leaders a more cautious policy, but we shall promise ourselves too much in expecting any substantial change in their general course of conduct. Of all animals, a perverse or weak politician is the least teachable ; on most questions where there has been a division, it has been nearly the same since, as before the treaty was acted on.

Of this, their proceedings on the organizing and admitting the territory of the United States [Tennessee] into the Union as a state, is a singular instance. The people of that country have cashiered the temporary government, self created themselves into a state, adopted a constitution, chosen their officers, taken a census under a law of their own, apparently on the face of it open to fraud, and now claim to be a state already in union with the original states. A resolution of that purport has been in our House. Some of the leaders strenously insist that a simple resolution of each branch is necessary.

One of their spurious senators has arrived, and a few days since went into the Senate and claimed his seat, by virtue of his credentials from our new sister Tennessee, as she is called, and the rights of man. As the former was a new kind of coin, and the latter has been often declared, and even counterfeited by rogues and rascals, a majority of the up stair folks determined to take time to inspect both, and with some difficulty persuaded the bearer to leave them. Mr. Burr and his associates are quite zealous for a declarative resolution of their present right. Probably the report of a committee of the Senate, which I enclose as

a fair state of the case, will be adopted in that branch, and a bill be sent to the House of Representatives. No doubt this is one twig of the electioneering cabal for Mr. Jefferson. It probably originated from the quarter where much mischief is brewed. It threatens disquiet to that country, and vexation to the government.

Mr. Liston arrived here last evening. The resolution of the court of Great Britain in respect to the posts, originated from the mad conduct of the democrats in our country. In that we can't so highly blame them, but their impressments are to me, unaccountable and provoking. I hope, however, the country will continue quiet, and trust in the Executive for redress and future protection. Mr. Livingston's bill on that subject was a mere firebrand, calculated to embroil the two governments, and expose a numerous class of our seamen. Many of those I commonly act with, I know were as much opposed to the bill, as those who voted against it, but supposed it expedient to consent. It is amended by the Senate, but as it is purged of its inflammatory particles it is uncertain whether it will finally pass.

We are rejoiced to find the session drawing to a close, both on a public and personal account; the exact day of adjournment cannot be predicted, I believe it will not exceed the first of next month. In this uncertainty I will not request any further letters, as it is possible we may rise even earlier. Yours, respectfully,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, May 27th, 1796.

Sir,

I am happy to find from your letter of the 15th, and others from my friends, that your election has been conducted with so much unanimity, and so highly for the honor and welfare of the state. I need not add my sincere wishes that your virtuous administration may be followed with your own personal happiness.

Mr. Hillhouse set out for home this morning and will be at Hartford early next week; the cause of his early return, is his aid being necessary on the application of the college before the legislature. He will tell you the state of public business. The most serious embarrassment is in the treasury department, owing to the perverse and ruinous delay of the House of Representatives in not seriously and early adopting the system devised by the Secretary of the Treasury. That, I have before advised you, was to create stock to pay the anticipations at the bank. Two months ago stock would have sold at par—now that can't be done. The Senate have given an unexpected and unfortunate direction to the business. You will be informed by Mr. Hillhouse relative to it. Our anxiety has this session been constantly in exercise on the perilous aspect of public affairs, but to our mortification it has been increased by the absence of too many of the friends of the government in both Houses.

So far as I am advised by my letters from Hartford, I imagine the current sets in favour of Mr. Hillhouse's appointment as Senator. If that should be the case, I still hope Col. Wadsworth will not refuse being a candidate. Not having an opportunity of seeing Mr. Trumbull since the receipt of your letter, I dont know

what arrangements he will make ; so many are absent or have liberty of absence, I should conclude he will think his presence cannot be dispensed with. I am not authorized to give any information about his final answer as to the appointment ; the opinion of his friends is that it will be an affirmative one.

We have this instant passed a resolution for an adjournment of Congress on Wednesday of next week. Mrs. Wolcott and the children will spend the hot months of the summer a few miles from the city. I forgot to mention that Mr. Liston, the English Ambassador, appears to be an amiable and worthy man ; if he proves a candid envoy, he will be a new and valuable acquisition to the United States.

A bill of more than usual consequence is in reading, which obliges me to conclude with my respects to yourself and my sentiments of affection for Mr. Mosely and Laura. I am, your obedient and humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## JONATHAN TRUMBULL TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, 19th May, 1796.

Sir,

I have received your favour of the 4th instant. Disposed as I am at all times, to follow the voice of my fellow citizens in their call for my services, I now cheerfully listen to the late honourable expression of their will, and accept with gratitude and pleasure the appointment which your Excellency has announced to me, of Lieutenant Governor of the State. But as our State has at this time but one member on the floor of the Senate of the United States, and as several senators are absent from that body, I shall think it my duty to remain in my present situation, either until I am especially called from here, or until the close of the present session of Congress, which I expect will probably terminate in the course of next week.

Your Excellency justly observes that Congress ought to do some material public good to compensate for the vexation they have occasioned. Some valuable acts will be completed, but perhaps it will appear that the most material good that will be accomplished, will be the prevention of the evil which was intended. A truly valuable object this, if pretty fully effected. All necessary treaty appropriations are completed, and all arrangements are made and making for their full execution—in consequence of which our happy country will, I trust, continue to enjoy the blessings of neutrality, peace and security.

The new British Minister has arrived, and has been presented to the President. It is said he is furnished with full instructions to conciliate the affections, and to further the interests of our country, and that he possesses the best dispositions towards effecting these desirable objects. I am sure the President and Executive will be prepared to meet him in these estimable views.

I beg leave most sincerely to congratulate your Excellency on your election to the first chair of the State, and have the honor to be, with great esteem and regard, sir, your obedient and humble servant,

J. TRUMBULL.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, May 20th, 1796.

Sir,

Yesterday Mr. King was nominated as Minister to the Court of London, instead of Mr. Pinckney, who requests permission to return.

On the eve of an election for a part of the Senate, we regret that so many of its ablest members will either resign or decline a re-election. Mr. Strong intends a resignation to their present legislature; Mr. Cabot, the like in case of certainty of a right successor. Others now express a determination not to accept a future appointment. There is not danger of an anti-federal Senate, but the loss of tried characters is a misfortune, and when old rats leave a house, it has always been considered as a bad omen. There is now left only a bare majority of good men in the Senate, so many are absent. I believe, however, we shall get along.

Yours respectfully,

C. GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, May 22d, 1796.

Sir,

The expectation of an adjournment of Congress the present week is become doubtful. On the bills relative to military establishment, and the payment of the debts due the bank are different votes of the Houses, and a great deal of business remains unfinished. I will not set any day for our quitting this place.

In the papers I enclose for yourself and Mr. Moseley, you will find the only news. The ostensible design of the leaders in one House, as to the question of a major general being retained in the army, is that of economy. The true object is to get aid of General Wayne, and place the army in the hands of a Jacobin, and what is worse, a western incendiary. I am respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., May 26, 1796.

It gives me great pleasure to observe the result of the election, and the evidences of stability and moderation in the conduct of the Legislature.[a] While the northern States continue firm, and while honest and able men can be induced to hold public offices, we shall be able to maintain the present government. It will fail whenever it shall be administered by the demagogues of the day.

As yet, Congress have done nothing of consequence. The measures for improving the revenue, for obtaining loans, for establishing the military department, and many objects which require appropriations, remain undetermined. By absence and other causes, the Senate is become weak, and the majority of ill-disposed men in the

[a] Of Connecticut.

House greater than at any former period. The principal mischief which will be attempted, is the admission of Tennessee, and this I think probable.

After the session is over, I will write you a full account of the state of our affairs; at present I will only say, that they are precarious, in consequence of the prevalence of faction. They might go on well, if the Legislature was well disposed; and if they fail, the House of Representatives will be solely responsible.

People here are alarmed with the report that the New Englanders are overrunning the lands of this State, and suspect that they are encouraged covertly by the State of Connecticut. I tell them that it is not true. It is said that Gov. Mifflin has applied for some act to be done by way of restraint or disavowal of irregular settlements. I do not know what will be proper, though I should think that measures ought to be taken to secure the honour of the State from injurious imputations.

## JONATHAN TRUMBULL TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, 27 May, 1796.

Sir,

When I wrote your Excellency last, I expected Congress would have been adjourned in all this week, but it is now found that our business will press us into the next week, not however (I hope) beyond the 1st of June. The claim of the intended new State of Tennessee for admission into the Union, has given us much trouble, and is not yet brought to a close between the two Houses; the financial provisions are not yet worked into the shape that the Secretary would wish, but are still suspended between the Houses. I hope however, they will eventually assume a shape more favourable than has been feared. The military establishment, with its necessary appropriations, has also been a subject of contest, but will probably be favourably terminated. These contested points, with some other objects of smaller consequence, have protracted the session beyond what had been contemplated; but we shall finally close, I hope, in tolerable harmony, and with tolerable satisfaction as to its great objects.

I have entertained the hope that I should have had the pleasure of meeting your Excellency and the Legislature before your adjournment, but I fear a disappointment in this expectation. I shall however, hasten to Connecticut as speedily as possible, after my releasement from my present duty. With very great respect and esteem, I am, sir, your Excellency's most ob't and humble servant,

J. TRUMBULL.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 28, 1796.

I much fear that the new stock will not sell on the terms proposed, nor on any terms without an enormous discount, probably not in sufficient sums at more than 17s.

Treasury drafts cannot be negociated for the sums wanted, without a still greater loss, unless they are made payable at a short date, say three or four

months; this will endanger the public credit and affect the banks, especially that of the United States. The consequence is, the frigates must stop, or the new stock must be sold on any terms. Sales of bank stock are urged; this idea has, however, been strenuously opposed by me. There is but one other resource which I can think of, and that is, to pledge sufficient sums of the new stock to be sold, after the expiration of six or eight months if not redeemed. * *

FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

May 30th, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I perceive Congress are invading the sinking fund system. If this goes through and is sanctioned by the President, the fabric of public credit is prostrate, and the country disgraced. Treasury bills and every expedient, however costly, to meet exigencies, must be preferable in the event, to such an overthrow.

Yours truly,

A. HAMILTON.

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, June 1st, 1796.

Sir,

Congress meets this afternoon to close the business of the session, and we have little more to do than mere matters of form, before we adjourn. Inclosed is a list of acts; the one for the admission of the State of Tennessee, was carried by the casting vote of Mr. Livermore, President of the Senate. It must be left for him to account for his conduct; his friends are chagrined. It is possible this act may have most serious effects; I don't think it so probable as others, whose opinions I respect.

After the perilous and irksome part of the friends of government in the House, it has wounded us extremely that no remonstrances or respect for public business have been able to keep the Senators and members of our House here a few days or a week, and, what was not to be expected, that most mismanagement has happened in the Senate. More mischief, has however been prevented, than could have been expected, and the most essential laws have been passed to keep the government moving. Its wheels are not to stop. If, however, we promise ourselves an end of difficulties, we shall disregard prognostics. Every summer for several years past, has waked up some ferment, and this, it is likely, will have its share.

We set out for home to-morrow morning, in a carriage with our Connecticut friends. I am, your ob't, humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

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To return to the concerns of the Treasury, excepting

the treaty with Great Britain, the most important and the most exciting subject of debate.

A few of the suggestions of the Secretary were adopted during the session. Thus the time for receiving on loan the domestic debt of the United States, still unsubscribed, was further extended. The change in the method of reimbursing the six per cent. stock was made, and the reimbursement extended to the stock issued for balances due the states. Some alterations were also made in the internal revenue laws, and the mode of collection was rendered more efficient.

But the subject of an increase of the revenue was not easily arranged. While both parties acknowledged that more was wanting for an effectual diminution of the debt, they differed totally as to the mode of providing it. The federalists proposed extending the system of indirect taxation; but while a majority in the House were in the opposition, this was impossible. "From an opinion," says Marshall, "that direct taxes were recommended by intrinsic advantages, or that the people would become more attentive to the charges against the administration, should their money be drawn from them by visible means; those who wished power to change hands had generally manifested a disposition to oblige those who exercised it, to resort to a system of revenue by which a great degree of sensibility will always be excited."[a] There was now perhaps less disposition than ever, to relax in their efforts to make the administration unpopular, and quite as little to assume the *onus* of an unpopular act themselves.

The committee of ways and means on the 17th of March made a report, based on the representations of the Secretary, stating two sums, either of which annually applied, in addition to the present revenues, would, though within different periods, be sufficient for the liquidation of

[a] Life of Washington, V. 566.

the debt not already provided for. The report concluded as follows:

"The committee having contemplated the various resources of the United States, which may be resorted to in the present exigency, and having in the first instance turned their attention to the subject of indirect taxes, were not able to agree upon objects suitable for that kind of taxation, from which an adequate revenue could be obtained without great inconvenience and embarrassment. On recurring to objects of direct taxation, they are of opinion that those are alone competent to yield such a revenue as appears necessary; the subject being, however, of a new impression, and presenting various difficulties which, although of a nature to be overcome, yet are such as prevent the completion of a proper system, during the present session, the committee have concluded to go no further at this time, than to report a resolution preparatory to that object.[a]

The committee are, moreover, of opinion that some further revenues, in addition to the improvements of the present internal revenues, already and hereinafter proposed, may during this session be obtained from an extension of the indirect taxation, and therefore submit certain resolutions to that effect.

But inasmuch as the actual receipts into the Treasury will be inadequate to discharge the current expenses of the government, and the loans had of the Bank of the United States, which fall due in the course of the present year; and as future loans and anticipations may become necessary, the committee are of opinion that a loan to the amount of five millions of dollars ought to be opened, for the purpose of discharging the said debt to the Bank of the United States."

A series of resolutions were subjoined—one directing the Secretary of Treasury "to prepare and report to the House at the next session a plan for raising two millions of dollars by apportionment among the several states, agreeably the rule prescribed by the constitution; adapting the same to such objects of direct taxation, and such modes of collection as might appear by the laws and practice of the states respectively, to be most eligible in each." Others proposed a duty on testamentary dispositions, descents, and successions to estates of intestates, other than to parents, husbands, wives, or lineal descendants; on stamps; an increased duty on carriages for the conveyance of persons; and a loan.

[a] By "direct taxes" in the constitution, it was generally considered were meant those which are raised on the capital or revenue of the people; by indirect, such as are raised on their expense. Gallatin's "Sketch of the Finances," p. 12.

A bill was introduced into the House, authorizing the commissioners of the sinking fund to issue 6 per cent. stock to the amount of $5,000,000, to be applied to the payment of such debts of the United States as were due, or should become so during the year, including both foreign and domestic loans; but providing that the stock should not be sold under its par value. As this, however, did not cover some of the extraordinary appropriations, and was liable to contingencies, the Secretary, on the 6th of May, addressed the chairman of the committee of ways and means, enclosing a second statement of the probable receipts and expenditures of the United States, including the appropriations already made, and those contemplated by bills then before Congress, the results of which showed that the further sum of $1,310,605, must be obtained from loans or new revenues, for those objects, and for the instalment of the foreign debt, of which the amount was necessarily to be raised in the United States. In other respects, the statement agreed with that accompanying the report made at the commencement of the session.

The estimates for the service of 1796, as thus determined, were as follows:

EXPENDITURES:

| | |
|---|---|
| Interest on the debt of all kinds, | $4,015,197 27 |
| Reimbursement of Dutch loan, | 414,100 00 |
| Civil list, mint, annuities and grants, light houses and miscellaneous expenses, | 568,064 94 |
| Indian trade, | 158,000 00 |
| Civil list, (additional) | 24,000 00 |
| War department, | 1,480,247 00 |
| Naval department, | 73,934 00 |
| Naval department, (former grant) | 296,917 82 |
| Military pensions, | 85,098 00 |
| Contingent expenses of government, | 20,000 00 |
| Diplomatic department, | 341,132 00 |
| Expenses incident to treaties, | 134,491 00 |
| | $7,611,182 03 |

| | |
|---|---|
| RECEIPTS: | |
| Duties on imports and tonnage, | $5,679,418 58 |
| Internal revenues, | 337,255 36 |
| Postage of letters, | 35,000 00 |
| Letters patent, | 660 00 |
| Dividends on bank stock, | 160,000 00 |
| Proceeds of the sinking fund, | 88,242 79 |
| | $6,300,576 73 |
| Sum to be provided, | 1,310,605 30 |
| | $7,611,182 03 |

In respect to the mode of obtaining this sum, the Secretary observed: "It being known to the committee that no loans can at present be negotiated in Europe, and that the high profits which reward commercial enterprise, though beneficial to the community, are obstacles to the success of domestic loans beyond a limited amount; I cannot, consistently with my duty, omit expressing it as my opinion, that some effectual measures for improving and extending the revenue, ought to be adopted during the present session of Congress."

The proposition of further indirect taxes, which had been strongly opposed in the committee itself, failed in the House, except as to an additional duty on pleasure carriages. With regard to the tax on devises and successions, there seems to have been some doubt entertained as to its nature. Some of the federal members opposed the resolution concerning the actual direct tax; by others it was advocated as a wise precautionary measure.

The bill funding the bank debts passed the House with the clause restricting the sale of the stock below par; but the United States Bank claiming the payment of the instalment and loans due them, and urging that the provision made should not be thus defeated, Wolcott, on the 12th, addressed a letter to the Senate, stating that the bill, with this restriction, would not furnish an adequate resource. There being no possibility of obtaining the

money abroad, or that effectual provision of revenue would be made during the session, he suggested the necessity of vesting in the commissioners power to obtain loans, unclogged by any conditions which could possibly occasion a failure of public credit. The act was in consequence modified, so as to allow not more than one-half the stock to be sold under par, and it was rendered irredeemable before 1818. In case they saw fit, the commissioners were allowed as a final resource, to sell the bank shares held by the United States for the same purpose. Provision was made in the foreign intercourse bill and the supplementary appropriation act, for the other requisite funds, by temporary loans.

The expedient of selling the bank stock was reprobated by Mr. Hamilton, as a violation of system; its use was opposed by Wolcott, and was only resorted to by the Commissioners upon the most urgent compulsion.

On all these questions the debates were vehement and protracted. It was only towards the end of May that the several acts passed, insufficient as they were for their object. The loan, as will be hereafter noticed, proved unsuccessful; and thus for another year, a year of perplexity and distress, was an adequate provision for the debt deferred, while events were fast thickening to render the provision more difficult, as it was more urgent. The course pursued by the opposition justified the charge, that these embarrassments were not without design; that their motive was, in the language ascribed to one of their leaders, "to stop the wheels of the government." All the accumulations which had hitherto taken place, had occurred during the years in which they possessed a majority in the Representatives, and while the appropriations were made by them, the means of payment were withheld. It was thus that they enabled themselves to charge the increase upon the administration.

Some of the other laws of this session may be enumer-

ated as of historical importance; such were those establishing trading-houses with the Indians; regulating trade and intercourse with them; providing for the sale of the public lands in the territory north west of the Ohio, and establishing the military force of the United States. By the act providing for the relief and protection of American seamen in foreign countries, the President was authorized to appoint agents, of whom one was to reside in Great Britain, whose duty it was made to procure the release of seamen impressed or detained.

Authority to complete three of the six frigates whose construction, under the act of the last session, depended on the result of the negotiation with Algiers, was obtained. No peace having been concluded with the remaining Barbary powers, this measure was vitally important for the safety of our commerce in the Mediterranean; but the hostility of the anti-federalists to any national establishments was unabated, and it was only with great difficulty that even this miserable embryo of a navy was permitted, at a time of general war, and when our commerce was every where subject to depredation. A law also passed, admitting the state of Tennessee into the Union. On the first of June a long and stormy session terminated by the adjournment of Congress.

Several changes took place in the legations this spring. In May, Mr. King was appointed minister plenipotentiary to Great Britain, in place of Mr. Pinckney, who had requested his recall; Col. Humphreys was transferred to the court of Spain as minister resident, in place of Mr. Short, and Mr. John Q. Adams as plenipotentiary to that of Portugal, in place of Col. Humphreys. The several boards of Commission under the treaties with Great Britain and Spain were filled.

# CHAPTER XII.

## SUMMER AND FALL OF 1796.

THE following papers are memoranda of certain disclosures, which induced the belief that the Directory now meditated some decisive movement in the western parts of the United States, or at least that it was disposed to put itself in a position to accomplish such a plan in case of war. The conduct of Genet before the conclusion of the peace between France and Spain, in setting on foot expeditions against Florida and Louisiana, and in promoting a separation of the western people from the Atlantic states, manifested that France was capable of entertaining such a scheme, while the increase of French emissaries, and with them increasing discontent in that section of the country, had already given rise to suspicions that it had not yet been abandoned. The facts now discovered were well calculated to strengthen them.

PHILADELPHIA, May 19th, 1796.

In the latter part of March last, a gentleman in whose honour and veracity I have entire confidence, called upon me at my office and informed me, that M. Collot and M. Warin, with another Frenchman, whose name he did not know, were shortly to proceed on a tour through the western parts of the United States; that they were to visit the western parts of Pennsylvania, the northwestern territory, Kentucky and the southwestern territory, and that they were to be furnished with maps and drafts of those countries.

That they were instructed by M. Adet, the French minister, to observe the posts of the United States on the lakes and elsewhere, and to note all places possessing remarkable natural advantages, either for defence or commerce; that they

were to proceed down the Mississippi to New Orleans, and were there in concert with officers of the Spanish government, to ascertain the proper place for a depot; that in their travels they were to ascertain and note the names of the persons of most influence, in every town and village, and were to avail themselves of proper opportunities of observing the temper of the country in respect to a political connection with France; that they were to cherish sentiments favourable to such a connection, by observing that the interests of the eastern and western parts of the United States were in collision, that the period was not distant when a separation must take place, and the range of mountains on this side the Ohio, was the natural boundary of the new government, and that in the event of a separation the western people ought to look to France as their natural ally and protector.

The Frenchmen before mentioned were moreover instructed to use all means in their power to promote the election of Mr. Jefferson as President of the United States.

The gentleman who gave me the information before related, said that I might rest satisfied with its truth, as he had seen the instructions in writing from M. Adet, the French minister. He moreover said the expenses of the mission to the western country were to be borne by the French government.

It is not to be understood that what is herein said of the instructions, is literally exact, as the gentleman relied upon his memory. He said however, that he had seen and read the instructions but two days before he informed me of their purport as above stated.

I communicated the information immediately to the President, with the name of the gentleman from whom I received it, and took measures for observing the conduct of the Frenchmen, particularly Collot, and am well assured that they left Philadelphia for the westward about the latter part of April. I have reason to believe that they carried letters from Messrs. Gallatin and Findley.

Having conferred this day with the gentleman who gave me the information before stated, he admitted it to be correctly related in this paper,

## MEMORANDUM.

PHILADELPHIA, May 21, 1796.

I was yesterday again with the gentleman who informed me of the object of Collot and Warin's journey to the westward, and collected the following circumstances.

That Gallatin has been in frequent conferences with M. Adet, and had doubtless assisted in devising the plan and instructions, which manifest a minute knowledge of the western country. That he had seen Hutchins' map in the possession of Collot, with a line of march marked on it with red ink, which Collot said was done by Gallatin. This line was partially copied on a map by the gentleman, which he lent to me, and is the same which I have traced with a pencil on a map belonging to the Secretary of War.

In this conversation I collected, though it was not intended to be mentioned, that all the information which I have was extracted from Collot himself, who as

the gentleman observed, is too communicative for the service with which he has been entrusted.

It was said to me that the plan of a memorial was to be drawn by Gallatin, showing the policy of a cession of Louisiana by Spain to France, founded partly on suggestions contained in the archives of the French legation, in the time of Compte de Moustiers, and partly on circumstances resulting from recent events. Of the latter, the following ideas were most material.

1st. That the Atlantic States would remain commercial and defenceless, and of course susceptible of influence from Great Britain; that the only or best means of continuing the influence of France, would therefore be to give her the command of the Mississippi, which would enable her of course to control the western country.

2d. That Spain would by a cession to France, form a barrier against the incursions of the Americans, and secure the safety of her American dominions.

It was told me that M. Jaudenes had furnished Collot and Warin with passports.

In consequence of this information a confidential person was sent to follow Collot, and ascertain if possible his motions. The following extract of a letter from him confirms these statements. What steps were ultimately taken by government to defeat the plan are unknown, though it appears that so far at least as these persons were concerned, they were effectual.

PITTSBURGH, June 15, 1796.

This morning I paid a visit to Gen. C*****, in company with his adjutant, who came to see me about 10 o'clock and desired me to go and see the General, who arrived last evening from Makee's port and is lodged at the Green Tree. I found I was expected, and was very politely received. After the usual compliments of introduction, the conversation turned upon the situation of this place which he had viewed in the course of the morning. He passed a very severe censure on Fort Fayette with respect to its weakness, and more so on account of the improper situation in which it stands. The British treaty came next in play. His observations on it were such as could be expected from an Enragé or a Jacobin, who cannot bear any contradiction to his opinion. After many caricatures both on the Executive and the Legislature of the United States, he concluded that we would reap very little benefit by the surrender of the western posts, as he knew well the British had built a new fort opposite, and effectually commanding that of Detroit; that upon trial the bullets had reached with success.

He observed that he was most sure that the Court of Spain would not ratify the treaty, because it was through the French influence that such generous terms had been granted, on the supposition that the British treaty would be rejected by

the United States, and that if necessary the Americans would join France and Spain against England, to which plan it was very probable Portugal would accede. At all events he had no doubt that the administration of Louisiana would not comply with the clause respecting the Mississippi, &c. I have been informed by his adjutant, that when in Philadelphia he was daily and hourly in conference with the Spanish Minister, Jaudenes; indeed, he says so himself, and that explains his speaking so boldly and confidently of the Spanish interest.

* * * *

About 4 o'clock in the afternoon he came to Jno. Marie's where I had dined, and where I was in conversation with his adjutant. He seemed pleased to see me again, and politely intimated that he intended to pay me a visit. He renewed the conversation of the morning, in the course of which he informed me that the plan of his voyage was to go down the Ohio as far as Limestone, where he would leave his boat and procure horses to go to Lexington and Danville, and from thence ride across the country to Fort Washington. He promises himself a great deal of satisfaction in Kentuckė, as he had 12 or 15 letters of introduction for gentlemen of the first rank in that country, and where his friend Sebastien would introduce him to many others. From Fort Washington he proposes to procure fresh horses and visit all the posts as far as Greenville, where he is to spend some days with General Wilkinson, for whom he has several letters of strong recommendation. When returned to Fort Washington he will cross again the Ohio and ride through the country to Danville and Louisville. Within six miles of this last place lives Mr. Sebastien, and with him he proposes to stay a week or ten days. From thence he intends to ride to Cumberland and visit the whole southwestern territory. His next excursion will be to Port Vincennes, and perhaps go by land to Kaskaskias and Cahokia; then to cross the Mississippi to St. Louis on the Spanish side, view the country, come down to St. Geneviéve, New Madrid, and all the other Spanish posts down the Mississippi to New Orleans, where he proposes to spend the winter.

He asked me a great many questions about Galliopolis, how many people remained there, what they were doing, and in what dispositions they were towards our government.

* * * *

General C. gave me to understand that the French government would not quietly put up with the ratification of the British treaty, and that the moment the despatches sent by Adet were arrived, an order would issue to stop any American vessel bound to England or any part of the British possessions;[a] that in all probability Spain would adopt the same measures, and perhaps Portugal. He went as far as to say that he would bet that seizures would begin in less than three months. We shall see, said he, how the mass of the people of this country will like the British alliance, and how they will treat those characters who have given it support; the energy and resources of France are not known in this country, for if they were, they should have been a sufficient motive to defeat British in-

[a] An arrête of the Directory had actually been announced in August, subjecting the commerce of neutrals to the same treatment as they submitted to from England.

fluence. The timid Executive of the United States was afraid of a war with Britain, because she has a powerful navy and has Canada, &c. France has also a navy, though perhaps not so great, but sufficient to take American vessels. France has no footing on this continent, but who knows how soon they may get possession of Louisiana and both Floridas from the Spaniards in exchange for some other property? If that should be the case, as there is a great probability, what will become of the produce of your Kentucké, your western territory, indeed of all the country this side of the Alleghany mountains? You will be reduced to the necessity of throwing yourself into the arms of the French, and abandon the Union which cannot give you a market, &c., &c., &c.

* * * *

Further elucidation of this affair is found in Mr. Jefferson's "Ana," where the following account is given, apparently for the purpose of perpetuating something discreditable to Senator Ross:

"*March the 27th*, 1800. Judge Breckenridge gives me the following information. He and Mr. Ross were originally very intimate; indeed he says he found him keeping a little Latin school, and advised and aided him in the study of the law, and brought him forward. After Ross became a Senator, and particularly at the time of the western insurrection, they were still in concert. After the British treaty, Ross on his return informed him that there was a party in the United States who wanted to overturn the government, who were in league with France; that France by a secret article of treaty with Spain was to have Louisiana; and that Great Britain was likely to be our best friend and dependence. On this information, he, Breckenridge was induced to become an advocate for the British treaty, During his intimacy with Ross, he says that General Collot, in his journey to the western country called on him, and he frequently led Breckenridge into conversations on their grievances under government, and particularly the western expedition; that he spoke to him of the advantages that country would have in joining France when she should hold Louisiana; showed him a map he had drawn of that part of the country; pointed out the passes in the mountains and the facility with which they might hold them against the United States, and with which France could support them from New Orleans. He says that in these conversations Collot let himself out without common prudence. He says Michaux (to whom I, at the request of Genet, had given a letter of introduction to the Governor of Kentucky as a botanist, which was his real profession) called on him; that Michaux had a commissary's commission for the expedition which Genet had planned from that quarter against the Spaniards; that ——, the late Spanish commandant of St. Genevieve, with one Powers, an Englishman, called on him; that from all these circumstances, together with Ross's stories, he did believe that there was a conspiracy to deliver our country or some part of it at least to the French; that he made notes of what passed between himself, and Collot, and the others, and lent them to Mr. Ross, who gave

them to the President, by whom they were deposited in the office of the board of war; that when he complained to Ross of this breach of confidence, he endeavoured to get off by compliments on the utility and importance of his notes. They now cooled towards each other, and his opposition to Ross's election as Governor, has separated them in truth, though not entirely in appearance."[a]

Corroborative proof of the main fact, the intentions of the French government with respect to the western country, was also, during the summer, furnished by Mr. Monroe. From a hint, in a letter to the Secretary of State,[b] written in July, it appeared that a design of some kind was entertained, and the following extracts from that dated August 27th,[c] pretty clearly indicated what it was. The coincidences between the statement of Collot in the spring, and the rumours at Paris in August, are at any rate curious.

"I am told that a treaty with Spain is probably concluded, by which France is to have Louisiana and the Floridas. This might have been obtained when peace was made with Spain; but was declined from the fear it might ultimately embroil them with us. The acceptance of it now, therefore, shows that that motive has less weight at the present time than it had then. * * * * It is even whispered that an attempt on Canada is to be made, and which is to be united with Louisiana and the Floridas to the south, taking in such parts of our western people as are willing to unite. This is worthy your attention though it may be mere report."

In a subsequent letter, it is true, Mr. Monroe states that in a conversation with the French Minister of foreign affairs, such an intention was denied, but the denial appears not of much weight, as he could hardly have been expected to avow it. That a cession of Louisiana and Florida to France at this time was actually contemplated, is now known, although it was not included in the treaty made between those powers, and did not actually take place until 1800, when it was made secretly. The reason of the abandonment of the project, and consequently the

[a] Jefferson's Writings, p. 514.
[b] Monroe's "View of the Conduct of the Executive."
[c] Ibid. p. 376.

loss of present motive for further machinations in the west, was the fact that Spain, being then at peace with Great Britain, could better retain the possession of those provinces than France. It may also be remarked as possibly having a connection with this subject, that the arrest of Collot, on civil process by a citizen of the United States, formed the subject of a very angry correspondence between M. De la Croix and Mr. Monroe, in September of this year.

The situation of affairs with France was now daily becoming more perplexing. During the course of Mr. Jay's negotiation the same anxiety had been manifested by the Directory, in its correspondence with Mr. Monroe, that their minister and agents had exhibited in this country, to wit: that the treaty, if concluded at all, should be confined to a mere redress of grievances. Unfortunately Mr. Monroe had encouraged the supposition that this was the case, and the discovery that it extended to other objects, to "amity, commerce and navigation," excited therefore a displeasure the more vehement. This state of feeling was not decreased by the delay of that minister to to meet the objections he knew to be entertained, until they should be specifically urged upon. They had been offered by M. Adet and answered by Mr. Randolph in the summer of 1795, and the notes passed were forwarded to Mr. Monroe. Mr. Pickering had also, in September of that year, transmitted to him a complete reply to all anticipated objections to the treaty, as well as to the other complaints of France. As early as February, 1796,[a] M. De la Croix informed Mr. Monroe "that the Directoire had at length made up its mind how to act in regard to the treaty with England; that it considered the alliance as ceasing to exist from the moment that the treaty was ratified;" that an envoy extraordinary would be appointed to attend and represent the same to the government of

[a] Vide Monroe's "View," p. 321.

the United States, and that Adet had asked and obtained his recall; and yet it was not until March of that year, when the Directory were about to dispatch their ambassador to remonstrate against the treaty, that Mr. Monroe asked and obtained a specification of their complaints. So far as regarded the treaty, they were the same that had been offered in the previous year by Adet—that the United States, to the injury of France, had not insisted, in treating with Great Britain, that that power should recognize as part of the law of nations, two principles unknown to that law, and which in treating with France itself had been a subject of specific agreement. The construction put upon Mr. Jefferson's consular convention was another and fruitful source of disagreement. Mr. Monroe's reply, although a refutation of these complaints, was not the more satisfactory to the Directory on that account. This reply too, though decreed on the 15th of March, was not sent in until sometime after, and he delayed notifying the department of state of even this tardy movement, until the 2d of May. Before the receipt of his communication his recall had been determined on.

Relying upon a refusal of the House of Representatives to execute the treaty which their partizans in America had confidently expected, the French government did not press the subject at this time. But the final vote on that question, the news of which was received late in June, destroying this hope, determined their policy. From this time the tone of the French government became more and more accrimonious, and in the beginning of October all dissimulation ended by the issuing of an *arrêt*, in direct violation of their treaty with the United States, ordering the seizure of British property on board of American vessels and of provisions bound for England. Why they went no further at this time, will presently appear. Such was the course of affairs in France during this summer.

Besides the evil consequences arising from the luke-

warm and dilatory conduct of their minister, the government was yet more embarrassed by the seditious spirit of his friends at home. The agents of France had never defended the pretentions of their government, or the particular acts of injustice and violence of the citizens with more zeal than did the Jacobin Americans. Supported by an unprincipled and alien press, by numerous pamphleteers and by hosts of orators, sustained too by the countenance of such men as Jefferson, Madison and other leaders, if not by their undisguised influence, they openly and boldly vindicated and encouraged every aggression, every insult, every demand. "Not with more zeal," indignantly exclaims Marshall, "can the ardent patriot maintain the choicest rights of his country than was manifested in supporting all the claims of the French Republic upon the United States." No wonder that these claims multiplied, or that insult and aggression were repeated. No wonder that Adet was led to suppose that he could obtain by menaces, what his predecessors had failed to obtain by intrigue, and that he held out to his government inducements to persist in their course. That minister, although he had obtained his recall, was suffered at his own request, to remain for one great and final trial of his power by direct interference in the approaching election.

A circumstance calculated to add to the existing fever, was the disclosure at this time of the queries propounded to the cabinet in the spring of 1793, on the course to be pursued in reference to England and France. They appeared at large in Bache's Aurora, of June 9th. As they had been communicated in the strictest confidence and to four persons only, Jefferson, Hamilton, Knox and Randolph, and as two of these were beyond suspicion in the matter, the identity was confined to narrow limits. Mr. Jefferson thought proper to address a letter to the President stating that it was not *he* who was guilty of that breach of official trust. The President in reply observed:

"If I had entertained any suspicion before, that the queries which have been published in Bache's paper proceeded from you, the assurances you have given to the contrary would have removed them—but the truth is, I harbored none. I am at no loss to conjecture from what source they flowed, through what channel they were conveyed, nor for what purposes they, and similar publications appear."

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 14, 1796.

* * * *

The plan of the French and our patriots begins to develope. The history of the capture of the Mount Vernon, and the apology, or rather hypothesis offered in Mr. Bache's paper of this morning, are important facts when taken in connection with what we before knew. If more seizures shall be made, or if M. Adet shall not give a satisfactory explanation, I do not see but that Mr. Monroe *must* be recalled, and a special confidential minister sent. I shall be glad to know your opinion of what is to be done. If a minister is sent, who should he be?

* * * *

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

NEW YORK, June 15, 1796.

Dear Sir,

The post of to-day brought me a letter from you. From some recent information which I have obtained here, I have scarcely a doubt that the plan of the French is, 1st. To take all enemy property in our ships, contrary to the treaty between the two countries. 2d. To seize and carry in all vessels laden with provisions for any English port. Among this, all that they choose to think enemy property, will be seized, and for the residue they will promise to pay. This state of things is extremely serious. The government must play a skilful card, or all is lost. No doubt an explanation has been asked of Mr. A. There is room enough for asking it, and the result if explanatory, ought, in some convenient way, to be made known. Moreover, the government must immediately set in earnest about averting the storm. To this end, a person must be sent in place of Mr. Monroe. General Pinckney, John Marshall, Mr. Desaussure of South Carolina, young Washington, the lawyer, Mc Henry, Secretary of War, Judge Peters, occur as eligible in different degrees—either of them far preferable to Monroe. It may be understood that the appointment is permanent or temporary, at choice of the person sent. Under this idea, perhaps Pinckney may be prevailed upon—perhaps Marshall, it being well urged as a matter of great importance to the coun-

try. I mentioned to Col. Pickering an idea which has since dwelt perpetually in my mind. Mr. King ought not to be empowered to do any thing to prolong the treaty beyond the two years after the war. This will afford the government a strong argument. I earnestly hope this idea will prevail in the instructions. Yours truly,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S. After turning the thing over and over in my mind, I know of nothing better that you have in your power, than to send Mc Henry. He is not yet obnoxious to the French, and has been understood formerly, to have had some kindness towards their revolution. His present office would give a sort of importance to the mission. If he should incline to an absolute relinquishment, his mission might be temporary, and Col. Pickering could carry on his office in his absence. He is at hand and might depart immediately. I believe he would explain very well, and do no foolish thing. Though unusual, perhaps it might be expedient for the President to write himself, a letter to the Executive Directory, explaining the policy by which he has been governed, and assuring of the friendship; but this would merit great consideration. Our measures, however, should be prompt. Sometimes I think of sending Pinckney who is in England, but various uncertainties of possible delays, deter me from this plan. Remember always as a primary motive of action, that the favourable opinion of our own country is to be secured. A frigate or two as convoys, would not be amiss. If the English had been wise, they would neither have harrassed our trade themselves, nor suffered their trade with us to be harrassed. They would see this a happy moment for conciliating us by a clever little squadron in our ports and on the coast. A hint might perhaps, do no harm.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 17, 1796.

I have your letters of the 15th and 16th instant. That for the President will go by the next mail.

The affair of the capture assumes a more equivocal character, as respects the French government, than at first. In a confidential way from some of our merchants, I have reason to believe that proposals were made to Mr. Murgatroyd who built the ship, by a Mr. Dunkinson, an English gentleman not yet naturalized, to become the purchaser; that Dunkinson on finding that he could not obtain a register in his own name, made a conditional purchase of the vessel deliverable in England, after which, the vessel was registered in Murgatroyd's name; that the loading, though in the names of Willings and Francis, is in fact British property, and that these circumstances were known or strongly suspected by the owner of the French privateer. If these things are true, and the sole motives of the capture, the thing, though perhaps wrong, is not alarming. I do not find that any other capture has been made.

M. Adet, I understand, has written to Col. Pickering, that the priva-

teer was commissioned by the French government of St. Domingo, but that he is ignorant what the orders of the privateer are, or what orders the French Directory in the West Indies are authorized to give in respect to neutral vessels. This answer is neither satisfactory nor the contrary. It is nothing except that it leaves ground to suspect that the West India Directory possess some discretionary authority which may be used to distress us, if circumstances should render it expedient. What now gives me more concern than the capture, is the complexion of Bache's paper, which is, I think, calculated to prepare the public mind to expect a new course of conduct by the French, contrary to our treaty and distressing to our commerce.

I have for some time been inclined to think that Mr. Monroe ought to be recalled; but as others have doubted, and as the thing was not demonstrable, I have never urged it. Every event shows, however, new reasons for believing that we must stop the channels by which foreign poison is introduced into the country, or suffer the government to be overturned. At all hazards, the attempt must be made.

I have the power of the President to borrow, and have been making attempts in the manner you have intimated, but without prospect of success. Bills can only be used in a case of the utmost emergency, as the discount would be ruinous. I will however, carry on the public business this summer, some way or other, though I know that we shall ultimately fail unless some miraculous change in the public measures shall speedily take place.

## TO WILLIAM HETH.

PHILADELPHIA, June 19th, 1796.

I acknowledge and return you thanks for your favour of the 9th instant, and as the gentleman for whom the enclosed paper was designed is absent in the country, I shall dispose of it agreeably to your permission.

I rejoice that the conduct of the President is, as it ought to be, approved; not that I imagine that his well earned character can be elevated or depressed by the variable and uncertain breath of popularity. Public favour is frequently enjoyed for a time by the worst of men; at the present time it is in fact enjoyed in a great degree, by some whom I know to be very undeserving. I rejoice at the President's popularity, because under present circumstances the public confidence in his administration is essentially necessary to the preservation of the peace and happiness of this country. If our pretended patriots had succeeded in their projects, the President would have been rendered unpopular, but he would not have been less a man of distinguished wisdom and virtue, than he is at present; his claims to the public veneration would have been what they are now justly considered to be, the truth would finally have been known, the President's character would have been justified to the world, and the names of his opposers branded with deserved infamy—in the mean time, however, our country would have been torn by factions, villainy and hypocrisy would have enjoyed a triumph, we might have been involved in war, and our government might have been subverted. But though truth has at this time prevailed over cunning, our troubles

are not at an end; faction, calumny and opposition will be continued with as much violence as ever, until the great body of the people are brought to form a true judgment of the characters of those men who perplex the public councils. It is folly to suppose that this government can be long administered against the opposition which now exists—either the people must change their representatives, or change their government. Light and darkness can as well exist together, as the hostile principles in our government with a regular administration. The people of this free and happy country would not probably believe what I have stated, on any authority, certainly not on mine; they have heard of contests in public bodies, and as yet they have found no very bad consequences resulting from them. Let any man, however, review the history of the last three years, and consider the progress of opposition during this short period—what dangers have been experienced? what inroads have been made upon characters? who, except the President, has not been assailed with success? Is not malice now attempting to destroy his fame by perfidiously creating misfortunes for our country, with which to excite discontents? If the men who have done these things have not fully succeeded, have they not made progress towards the accomplishment of their purposes? Supposing them to succeed, what then will be our situation? Have they virtue, courage, talents to conduct the government? These are, in my opinion, serious questions, and much happiness or misery depends upon the reply which Virginia shall give to them. At any rate, this is certain, that the new fangled systems of democratic philosophy will not suit in practice the people of any part of the United States, and the people of Virginia less than any other; and that if once these systems are introduced, irreconcilable animosity against the authors will be the consequence.

The decision to recall Mr. Monroe was accelerated by the affair of the Mount Vernon, alluded to above.

FROM THE PRESIDENT.

MOUNT VERNON, 24th June, 1796.

Dear Sir,

If in the opinion of judges, it is thought best for my India wine to remain undisturbed where it now is, I am content it should remain there. I had however directed Mr. Kitt, my household steward, to learn when it should be ready for landing; and to have it brought up and stored in my own cellar, where it would not only have been safe, but would also have remained undisturbed; which may not be the case in a merchant's cellar, which is continually receiving and disgorging its liquors, and frequently removing one cask to get another.

You will perceive by a copy of a letter which goes from me to Col. Pickering,* by the post of to-morrow from Alexandria, that, be the circumstances of the Mount Vernon as they may, there is strong ground to believe that the French

* Vide Sparks' Writings of Washington, Vol. XI., p. 130.

mean to continue the practice of seizing our vessels in their commerce with Great Britain. It is the buzz of the democrats, and the Aurora is evidently preparing the public mind for the event, as the natural consequence of the ratification of the British treaty.

This measure will merit serious consideration, and close investigation; and I hope it will meet with them accordingly, that the decisions of the government may be wise, temperate and consistent. With very great esteem and regard, I am, dear sir, your affectionate,

GO: WASHINGTON.

## FROM THEODORE SEDGWICK.

STOCKBRIDGE, 26th June, 1796.

My Dear Sir,

* * * *

The views of the disorganizers of our government were never so well understood by the people here, as at the present moment, and yet I much fear that Mr. Skinner will prevail in the election in this district. In politics he is exactly the counterpart of the *Hon.* Mr. Varnum, and yet he has had the address to make many good people believe him to be highly federal. Though, however, I do fear, my hopes preponderate. I need not say to you that the election of a Senator in the place of Strong, is very disagreeable to me. I had contemplated retirement with much pleasure, and when that event can now happen, consistently with my idea of duty, God only knows.

I know it will give you pleasure to be informed that Mrs. Sedgwick is restored to her family perfectly recovered, and happy in it. I beg you to present to Mrs. Wolcott my affectionate regards, and believe me to be, as is true, with much esteem, your sincere friend,

THEODORE SEDGWICK.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

NEW YORK, June 26, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I learn from a gentleman of character, that a prize, brought into Boston by a French privateer, is about to be sold. This being in direct breach of our treaty with Great Britain, how does it happen? Though no particular law passed, the treaty being the law of the land, our Custom Houses can and ought to prevent the entry or sale of prizes upon executive instruction. If any thing is wanting to this end, for God's sake, my dear sir, let it be done, and let us not be disgraced. Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S. Considering what is going on, and may go on in the West Indies, it appears to me essential that the President be empowered to lay embargoes, in the interval between the present and the next session of Congress.

This seizure of the Mount Vernon occurred thus. The Flying Fish, a French privateer, which had been for some time lying at Philadelphia, watching the departure of vessels, on the 9th of June dropped down to the capes of the Delaware, and there captured and carried off that ship, the property of an American citizen; although, as afterwards appeared, contracted to be sold to an English resident. To all demands for an explanation, the French minister answered as usual, evasively. The case being one which could not be passed over, and it moreover appearing probable that general orders must have already issued for the seizure of American vessels engaged in commerce with England,[a] Washington called upon the cabinet for their opinions as to the course to be pursued.

The President had long since been dissatified with the impotency of Mr. Monroe's negociations, and Mr. Pickering had, on the 13th of June, written to the latter expressing that dissatisfaction, and requiring him to come to an immediate explanation with the French government. As has been already mentioned, information of what he had at length done, was not received till sometime after this period. But upon the refusal of Adet to give a satisfactory reply to the first letter on the subject, the members of the cabinet became convinced that the longer continuance of Mr. Monroe abroad was impolitic; that all further delay in bringing the directory to a settlement of the disputes between the two nations, was injurious and degrading; and that a minister must be sent, whose views should be in accordance with those of the administration, and upon whose efficiency it could depend.

The following letter from the Secretary of State to Wolcott, contains the questions which Washington had submitted for consideration.

[a] In the beginning of July, a decree was actually issued, that neutral flags should be treated by France, as to confiscation, searches or capture, as they permitted the English to treat them.

## FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

June 30th, 1796.

Dear Sir,

The questions of which you requested a memorandum, are these:

"1st. Whether immediate explanations should be asked on this subject, from the minister of the French republic, in Philadelphia? And in that case, (which I am inclined to think is right) to proceed without delay of sending to me to make the requisition accordingly; unless, from the tenor of the answer to the letter you had draughted before I left Philadelphia, respecting the capture of the Mount Vernon, it should in your judgment be rendered unnecessary?

2d. Whether there is power in the Executive, and in that case whether it would be expedient, in the recess of the Senate, to send an extra character to Paris to explain the views of this government, and to ascertain those of France; and in the affirmative of these, to suggest for my consideration, the names of such persons as in your opinion are best qualified to subserve these purposes."

*Note.* The President desired that the treaties, the laws of nations, and of the United States, might be consulted as far as they may have relation to the subject.

I shall, by all means, be desirous of sending the answer to-morrow, and therefore of seeing you and Mr. McHenry this evening. Your ob't servant,

T. PICKERING.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

PHILADELPHIA, July 4th, 1796.

I have had the honour to receive your letter of June 27th, and have disposed of the enclosures agreeably to direction.

Last evening I called upon Mr. F. W. Francis, and he informed me that your wine was in good condition, and perfectly safe, stored in the compting house with two pipes of Mr. Willing's: it was Mr. Francis' opinion, that the situation was much better for the improvement of the wine than any cellar. I am no judge of the matter myself, and can cause a removal at any time, if the President judges it advisable. There is nothing new in town. Bache's paper continues, as usual, to be filled with abuse against the government, and predictions of French hostility. I believe, however, that his publications produce but little impression. Brown's paper of last evening, stated that the President was expected to return here in a few days. I have not been able to trace the origin of the report, but I presume it to be a trick of some person to excite alarm. It will be contradicted.

The questions proposed by the President, being of great consequence, we have thought it best to keep them under consideration a few days. The pressure of business with me is such, that I have not been able to bestow all the attention which I wish. The new stock will, I fear, remain unsold, notwithstanding the long credit which was offered: some new expedient must be adopted: what

will be best, I cannot yet determine. I shall act with caution, and pursuant to the best advice which I can obtain.

FROM THE PRESIDENT.

MOUNT VERNON, 6th July, 1796.

[Private.]

Dear Sir,

Your private letter (without date) by the last post has been received.

It is quite agreeable to me that my wine should remain in the store of Messrs. Willing & Francis, till I shall have occasion to remove it.

There is little doubt but the insertion in Brown's paper of my sudden return, was put there to answer some insidious purpose; for sure I am, nothing ever dropped from me to authorize such a publication, and that it is to be regretted that the authors of them could not be brought to light.

A report has circulated here that the William Penn has been captured by the Flying Fish, but as it is of some days standing, and your letter is silent on the subject, I hope it is void of foundation. That Mr. Bache will continue his attacks on the government, there can be no doubt, but that they will make no impression on the public mind is not so certain, for drops of water will impress (in time) the hardest marble.

I hear with concern that the new stock is likely to remain unsold, notwithstanding the long credit which was offered. Let the expedient (whatever it be) be well considered.

If any thing should occur of an interesting nature, although it should not require official communication, let me hear it. With very great esteem and regard, I am, dear sir, always yours,

GO: WASHINGTON.

The following reply was at length agreed upon.

THE SECRETARIES OF DEPARTMENTS TO THE PRESIDENT.

PHILADELPHIA, 2d July, 1796.

Sir,

Agreeably to your directions, we have consulted together on the subject of your letter of the 24th of June, and we are of opinion that a direct explanation should be asked of M. Adet, the minister of the French republic, in the terms of the enclosed draft of a letter to him, which, as you desired, will be sent without delay. We are all of opinion that the Executive has not the power, in the recess of the Senate, to originate the appointment of a *minister extraordinary* to France; and that the recal of Mr. Monroe, by creating a vacancy, can alone authorize the sending of a new minister to that country.

On the expediency of the change we are agreed. We think the great interests of the United States require that they have near the French government

some faithful organ, to explain their real views and ascertain those of the French. Our duty obliges us to be explicit. Although the present minister plenipotentiary of the United States at Paris, has been amply furnished with documents, to explain the views and conduct of the United States, yet his own letters authorize us to say that he has omitted to use them, and thereby exposed the United States to all the mischiefs which could flow from jealousies and erroneous conceptions of their views and conduct. Whether this dangerous omission arose from such an attachment to the cause of France, as rendered him too little mindful of the interests of his own country, or from mistaken views of the latter, or from any other cause, the evil is the same. We therefore conceive it to be indispensably necessary, that the present minister plenipotentiary of the United States at Paris should be recalled, and another American citizen appointed in his stead.

Such being our opinion, we beg leave to name for your consideration, Patrick Henry and John Marshall of Virginia, and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and William Smith of South Carolina; either of whom would, we believe, so explain the conduct and views of the United States as to satisfy the French republic, and thereby remove the danger of a rupture, or inconvenient controversy with that nation; or failing of this desirable effect, to satisfy the citizens of the United States, that the fault was not to be imputed to their own government.

In confirmation of our opinion of the expediency of recalling Mr. Monroe, we think the occasion requires that we communicate a private letter from him, which came to our hands since you left Philadelphia. This letter corresponds with other intelligence of his political opinions and conduct. A minister who has thus made the notorious enemies of the whole system of government his confidential correspondents, in matters which affect that government, cannot be relied on to do his duty to the latter. This private letter we received in confidence. Among other circumstances that will occur to your recollection, the anonymous letters from France to Thomas Blount and others, are very noticeable. We know that Mountflorence was the writer, and that he was the chancellor of the consul Skipwith; and from the connection of Mr. Monroe with those persons, we can entertain no doubt that the anonymous letters were written with his privity.

These anonymous communications from officers of the United States in a foreign country, on matters of a public nature, and which deeply concern the interests of the United States in relation to that foreign country, are proofs of sinister designs, and show that the public interests are no longer safe in the hands of such men.

The information contained in the confidential communication you were pleased to make to us, on the project of the French government relative to the commerce of the United States, is confirmed by the open publication of the same, substantially and more minutely in the newspapers. Mr. Fenno's, in which it first appeared, we now enclose. Even the execution of the project appears to have been commenced. The following article is in Mr. Fenno's paper of the 28th ultimo.

"*New London, June 23d.*—Arrived, brig Aurora, S. Wadsworth, of Hartford, in fourteen days from Port Paix. Left there sloop Crisis, Cook, of Warwick, with mules; sloop Scrub, Williams, of Middletown; and a brig from Philadel-

phia, all carried in by French privateers. It was not pretended to make prizes of them; but their cargoes were taken by the administration at their own price, and due bills given therefor. Those who go there to trade, and those carried in, are all treated alike. Captain Wadsworth received a due bill for eleven thousand livres."

The foregoing we respectfully submit to the consideration and decision of the President of the United States.

TIMOTHY PICKERING, Secretary of State,
OLIVER WOLCOTT, Secretary of the Treasury,
JAMES McHENRY, Secretary of War.

The Attorney General, who was absent from Philadelphia at the time of writing the above letter, addressed a separate one to the President, containing the same views. The opinion of the cabinet was therefore unanimous.

The President, in pursuance of this advice, determined to supersede Mr. Monroe. Much deliberation was employed in the choice of his successor, and Gen. CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY, brother of the late minister to Spain, was at length selected; and on the 22d of August Mr. Monroe was notified of his recall. Gen. Pinckney embarked for France early in September.

It was high time that Mr. Monroe should be recalled, though Washington did not at the time know all the reasons. It has remained for a French historian, in disclosing the relations between Mr. Monroe and the French government, to throw new light upon his conduct, and justify the wisdom of Fauchet's advice to the Directory, to "consult Monroe." M. THIERS says:

"In the French government there were persons in favor of a rupture with the United States. Monroe, who was ambassador, gave the Directory the most prudent advice on this occasion. 'War with France,' said he, 'will force the American government to throw itself into the arms of England, and submit to her influence; aristocracy will gain supreme control in the United States, and liberty will be compromised. By patiently enduring, on the contrary, the wrongs of the present President, you will

leave him without excuse, you will enlighten the Americans, and decide a contrary choice at the next election. All the wrongs of which France may have to complain will then be repaired.' This wise and provident advice had its effect upon the Directory. Rewbel, Barras and Larevéillère, caused it to be adopted in opposition to the opinion of the systematic Carnot, who, though in general favorably inclined to peace, insisted on the cession of Louisiana, with a view to attempt the establishment of a republic there."[a]

During this month, Mr. Van Polanen announced himself minister resident from the United Netherlands. Don Carlos Martinez d' Yrujo, the new Minister Plenipotentiary from Spain, had arrived in June to succeed Jaudenes.

Col. Pickering, by the President's direction, again addressed the French minister, requesting the explanation whether any new regulations or orders, relative to the commerce of the United States, had been issued by his government. Some time elapsed before a reply was received. It stated the ignorance of the minister on the subject, and in turn demanded whether the sale of prizes taken by French privateers had been forbidden in the ports of the United States. This subject of the right to *sell* prizes formed one of considerable difficulty, and much mutual complaint during this summer. The treaty with France gave to its armed vessels a right to *conduct* their prizes whithersoever they pleased, without paying duty, and to *depart* whithersoever their commissioners expressed. The French minister claimed the like right to sell them without payment of duty. All sales as regarded the prizes of privateers were prohibited by the Secretary of the Treasury, in a circular to the collectors, as inconsistent with the British treaty. For the present, the question as respected national vessels was reserved. The legality

[a] Histoire de la Rev. Français, Tom. 9. ch. 1. Idem, Trans. by F. Shoberl. III. 189.

of this order was disputed by the minister, and every artifice to avoid it practised by the consuls.

FROM THE PRESIDENT.

MOUNT VERNON, 4th July, 1796.

Sir,

Your letter of the 28th ult. with its enclosures, was received by the mail on Friday.

I wanted no delay in the commissioning of Mr. John Davis to be Attorney for the district of Massachusetts; if you or those who were better acquainted with his professional knowledge (before he embarked in the Comptrollership) than I am, thought them competent to the duties thereof.

That an entire section of a bill which had passed both Houses of Congress should be omitted in copying of it, and that such omission should have escaped the Committee of Enrolment, is a circumstance so singular in its nature, as scarcely to have a parallel. Being desirous, however, of carrying the *intention* of the legislature into effect, I have, though I confess unwillingly, endeavored to supply the defect by the Executive act, which is herewith enclosed. The consequences that might result from delay, have produced this act on my part; otherwise, as its operation is to be exterior, I should have hesitated longer before the signature was given, if at all.

By the last mail, I received a letter from the Governor of Pennsylvania, requesting "that I would direct such co-operative measures on the part of the officers of the United States, as may effectually counteract the danger which is apprehended from vessels holding an intercourse with the shores of New Jersey, in evasion of the quarantine prescribed under the authority of the laws of this State." I expected, from what passed previous to my leaving Philadelphia, that circular orders had issued long since, to the collectors of the different ports, and to the officers commanding the fortifications of our harbor, to afford such aid agreeably to the act of Congress relative to quarantine. As there are two letters from the Governor on the same subject, I shall send both of them by this day's post to the Secretary of State; and desire that if anything needful remains to be done, that orders to that end may issue immediately.

GO: WASHINGTON.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

FROM THE PRESIDENT.

MOUNT VERNON, 6th July, 1796.

Sir,

When the letter herewith enclosed [the preceding one] dated the 4th instant, was written in answer to yours of the 28th ult., part of it, as you will perceive, was dictated under the impression of much hesitation and doubt; for I am not fond of rectifying legislative mistakes by executive acts. I determined however, to take the Attorney General's opinion on the case; resolving if it ac-

corded with those which had been sent me, to give the act you forwarded, my signature.

For this purpose I requested that his opinion might be fully stated to me in writing, and delivered at Alexandria on the 4th, where I had promised to be at the celebration of the anniversary of Independence, that I might by the post of next day, or rather the mail of that evening, if his opinion had not a tendency to increase my own doubts, forward the act to you.

Knowing that neither time nor opportunity would be allowed at a crowded meeting to write, I prepared my letter in the morning before I left here, on the supposition of a concurrence, and in that case, that I might have nothing to do but to sign an enclose the act; but his opinion being adverse to this (as you will see by the enclosure which I request may be returned to me) I decline doing it; and have desired him to draught something anew.

This, when it comes to hand, (which I expected would have been in time for this day's post) shall be sent.

GO: WASHINGTON.

To the Secretary of the Treasury.

The fiscal transactions of the United States during this summer, were of but little interest. The same causes which had operated to the embarrassment of the Treasury during the preceding year, continued to exist, and of the loan of $5,000,000 created by the act of May 31st, and known as the 6 per cent. of 1796, but $80,000 was subscribed. In consequence of the failure of other means, the Commissioners of the sinking fund were eventually driven to the sale of a portion of the Bank Stock belonging to the government, to reimburse the instalment of foreign debt and the Bank loans. The act authorizing this measure was at the time denounced by Hamilton as a fatal invasion of the system, and his remonstrances against carrying it into execution were renewed during the summer. In this opinion Wolcott coincided, and he opposed it until there was found to be no alternative.

FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Litchfield, July 4, 1796.

Sir,

The inadequate support which the most important officers of the government receive, their high responsibility, severe services, the malignity which they have to encounter from the envy and venal influence of some, and the stupid pride

and ignorance of others, must be very discouraging to men to continue in services in which they are conscious that the public derive every attainable benefit from their greatest exertions and most able and faithful conduct.

I have always had the pleasure to know that you were respected by the sensible, the virtuous and the good. These are great rewards which a man ought to receive for faithfully conducting a business of the greatest national importance under government. In this State, which is very economical, I never heard of any complaint of the extravagant pay of the officers of the United States. I believe that they are very willing they should have more than is necessary for a bare subsistence. Men without merit will always endeavour to level every man to their own standard of meanness. If the policy of many in the United States continues, and the President, whose character has hitherto supported the government against the attacks of the base and perfidious, refuses a re-election, and a provision, not merely for a parsimonious subsistence according to public opinion, but for a pecuniary reward, be not made, I think that you should seriously reflect whether a more eligible situation cannot be obtained. A man who properly conducts the national finances, an interest of such high importance, ought, within not many years' service, to obtain a competent estate; but this is not to be expected, if a Gallatin, a Madison or a Giles should be able to influence the national councils—not from avarice but from a worse motive, if worse there be. Avarice indeed is the national vice of a Swiss; we may I believe, impute all his conduct to this motive in every respect.

While the war shall last, it will probably become more predatory and cruel. The French have told their armies it is to continue; the necessities of the warring nations, the increased inflammation of their passions, and their casting, as it were, the last die, will lead to a violation of every right. I suppose we are to expect that an almost general piracy will ensue. This the democrats have invited, and they will be much consoled if it shall take effect. Should all Europe be involved in general strife, a democrat would consider it as the Age of Reason; a christian would view it with horror, and as an evidence of the divine malediction inflicted on nations for abusing the reason which God has given them.

I sincerely wish that the President would suspend the enjoyment of retirement till the wars of Europe shall be brought to a final close. No one, on the ground of services, can have a greater claim to it than he has; but our country will be in a very precarious condition if he shall retire before they are ended. It will be impossible for this country not to be deeply affected while they continue.

My congratulations on the day. Our country at the period commemorated, was united but distressed; they are now disunited, rich and unhappy. I am, with the most affectionate regard,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## FROM FISHER AMES.

MARTINSBURG, IN VIRGINIA, July 5th, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I am on my way to the Berkeley Springs, where friends and physicians think health may be had by drinking. My faith in the bath is not strong, but the good effects of travellling are already considerable; I am, however, still feeble.

Opinion is at last yielding in Virginia to truth. That sort of men who are every where federal, are already so in the northern neck of Virginia, and no small impulse of the like kind is felt, as I am told and believe, in the residue of the state. Patrick Henry, if he would serve, would have more votes than Jefferson. The latter in every event will fail of four. Madison will be opposed by a very popular General Clark. Most of the others will be opposed, and on the whole a change is confidently promised to give four true federal representatives in the next Congress; more are hoped for. John Marshall might be chosen, but will not offer.

I am greatly consoled by the style of conversation here, and I do not foresee that in the event of coming to issue with the democrats, this State would not compel obedience to the laws within its limits. Mr. Rutherford is as little respected here as in Philadelphia, and yet the many whom he flatters and deceives, will support him against General Morgan. This is the opinion of federal men.

I expect to see you early in August, and I hope with more flesh and colour than I left Philadelphia. Respects to Mrs. W. and my best wishes for yours and the children's health. Yours, &c.,

FISHER AMES.

HAGERSTOWN, July 25th, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I am on my return from Winchester and Bath in Virginia. I passed a week at the latter and drank freely of its waters.* Their powers seem to be undoubted, although their analysis will not fully account for them. They are purgative, stimulant, alterative, and require a longer use than I could stay to make, to evince their efficacy on my poor system. Debility and bilious cases are said to be within its powers as a specific. I had, unfortunately, a turn of fainting, at the place, but it was accidental, and although I was reduced to extreme weakness, and much discomposed in consequence for two days, I hope and trust I am almost as well as before. I expect to see you in two weeks with a face ten or twenty per cent. better than I wore when I saw you last.

Virginia has been grossly deceived, and is yet unperfectly informed. Good men depend too much on the honesty of a faction, and the intelligence of a public. We owe more to the precipitate rashness of the party than to either or both. Some aid to good government and some change in the representation and the votes of the electors for President and Vice, may be expected. Four of twenty-one seem to be relied on. Virginia is infinitely nearer right and more impressible than I expected; much in this way ought to be attempted. Excuse bad and soiled paper from the bar of a tavern. South or Low Virginia, I ought to add, is worse disposed than the Northern Neck.

Bankrupts and rogues did not come near me, but the other sort who did, seem to think as the Yankees do. Union, constitution, laws, and above all the President, are the objects of all their zeal. But they do not seem so view the danger as nearly and clearly as they ought. I am almost cured of the habit of croaking by finding how they are disposed. When I think how they may be lulled, and whom they will choose, I relapse. Yours and Mrs. W's,

FISHER AMES.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

August 3d, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter of the 1st. I deplore the picture it gives, and henceforth wish to forget there is a Bank or a Treasury in the United States, though I shall not forget my regard to individuals.

I do not see one argument in any possible shape of the thing, for the sale of bank stock, or against that of the other stock, which does not apply vice versa, and I shall consider it as one of the most infatuated steps that ever was adopted. God bless you.

A. HAMILTON.

It will be known on Thursday whether anything is to be expected here.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

Philadelphia, August 3d, 1796.

Sir,

I have received your favour of July 29; the one referred to in answer of mine dated the 11th, never came to hand; to what cause the accident is to be attributed I cannot conjecture.

We have no news more than appears in the papers; our country was never more tranquil than at present; so far as I know, the public business is in a good train, except that the treasury is in want of loans. I shall be able to prevent injury to the public credit, but the building of frigates will proceed more slowly than I could wish, and some arrears in the war department will accumulate. There will be a meeting of the commissioners of the sinking fund, to consider whether circumstances do not require sales of the bank stock held by the United States. Nothing will be done without the most mature consideration, in which I shall be assisted by the advice and opinion of the Chief Justice and the Attorney General.

I take the liberty to enclose a copy of an oration delivered by Mr. Smith at Charleston, which I understand was well received by a numerous audience of all descriptions of people. This I consider as a proof that the prejudices which lately existed in that city have greatly moderated.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, Aug. 9, 1796.

I am well, and so is my family. Mrs. Wolcott lives at a farm-house about six miles from the city. The place is healthy, but inaccessible to company, there being no road near the house. If I were a democrat, I might raise a fund of popularity upon a circumstance of this kind, but it is well known that we live as we do because we cannot afford to live better, and this destroys all title to merit.

The affairs of the country are prosperous, except that the preservation of the public credit is a work of increasing difficulty. I shall get along for the present, and at any rate prove that nothing has been wanting on my part.

Whether the President will decline or not, is not certainly known to the public—to you I can say that I think he will *not*. This decision ought not, however, to be anticipated.

I shall be able to write you shortly upon some political subjects; as yet I have not been able to dispatch the business of the last session.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT.

Mount Vernon, 10th Aug., 1796.

[Private.]

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 3d instant did not get to my hands until the 8th. I most assuredly wrote the letter mentioned in my last, but I find it is no uncommon thing for my letters to miscarry. The originals to Gen. Pinckney of the — ult., (one of which contained $300 in bank notes for the sufferers by fire in Charleston) had not been received by that gentleman on the 26th of that month, altho' duplicates despatched eight days afterwards had. I have heard of no miscarriage of a mail, and I have evidence that the above letters (under one cover) proceeded safely as far as Richmond.

General Pinckney accepts the appointment to France, and will very shortly with his lady be in Philadelphia to embark. As this circumstance will furnish a new subject for envenomed pens, it merits consideration how far the causes which have occasioned it, should unofficially be spoken of by the officers of government.

Let me desire that you would begin to note such occurrences (not only those in your own department, but all others which may occasionally present themselves) as may be fit and proper to communicate to Congress at their next session. It is from these materials and such memorandums as I take myself, my speech is composed. It is better to note down everything which may be requisite on this occasion, than to omit anything, because it is easier to select than to collect matter at the moment I am going to compose it.

I am sorry the treasury is unable to answer all the appropriated calls upon it. My present intention is to leave this for Philadelphia in the course of next week; but as I shall travel slow, and have to halt a day or two on the road, my arrival there is a little uncertain. With very great esteem and regard, I am, dear sir, your affectionate

GO: WASHINGTON.

## FROM RUFUS KING.

London, Aug. 14, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I have been here too short a time to pronounce anything respecting our affairs with this government. The newspapers will be the heralds of the French con-

quests, which must compel the neighbouring nations to submit to, or purchase peace from France. Hammond is sent to the continent. His object is peace, but his success must be precarious from causes too obvious to require recital.

A late order of the Directory to stop the cargoes of all neutral vessels bound to English ports, if the paper is genuine, will prove vexatious to our commerce, especially in the West Indies. This government disavow the having issued the order cited by the Directory, and say they have issued no new order on that subject.

Every account that I have received since my arrival, confirms my belief that some of our countrymen at Paris have been the means of deceiving the French government respecting the temper and inclination of our people. We may suffer inconvenience from this indiscretion. Yours sincerely,

RUFUS KING.

## FROM COL. JOHN TRUMBULL.

LONDON, 7th September, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th Dec. last, which remained, with many others from my friend in America, in the hands of the Minister here, until my return a few days since from a long excursion on the continent. I did not often write to my friends from thence for various reasons, and particularly lest they should suspect that my opinions partook either of the warmth of the climate, or the fumes of the brandy in which I was conversant.

You will know from letters which Dr. Edwards (who is so good as to charge himself with this) carries, that this warmth of climate has lately had its influence on the discussion of certain points between us and a neighbouring nation. It is the extraordinary fate of the late treaty to originate harsh discussion on both sides of the ocean; but I hope its destiny also is to be on all sides the better esteemed in proportion to the greater latitude and earnestness of the inquiries to which it gives rise. Such has been its fate with you, and (so far as I know the state of the correspondence between the nation which is most interested, and our minister there,) such will be its fate I presume in Europe. It is certainly an odd spectacle to see the work of Jay in the hands of this defender; but it is also an interesting one, and I have hopes that both our country and her representative will derive honour from this source. So far as I am permitted to know, the argument is entirely with him; and whatever his private opinions may be, he has so well spoken the opinions and language of his country as to put his opponent in the wrong upon almost all points, and indeed to have forced him to abandon all the original grounds of controversy, except one little spot which he appears to have rendered as untenable as all the rest. I hope and trust we are safe from the effects of the political tempest which has so universally shaken this quarter of the globe.

You will know from the Secretary of State's office, that I am placed, by the singular concurrence of choice and destiny, in a state of the most absolute neutrality. I shall find it sometimes difficult, perhaps, to distinguish the precise

point of justice and equity, and my endeavours to ascertain it, will perhaps alternately give offence to both the interested parties; but as I neither sought this situation, nor shall ever seek any other situation of public responsibility, it may at least be relied upon by both, that what I do will be the true result of my best knowledge and judgment, imperfect in truth, but at least honest in its intentions.[a] As I am thus banished from my friends for another two or three years, it is but charity in them to write me as often as leisure from important objects will allow them time to attend to little ones. I must therefore beg you to steal a minute, oftener than once a year, to write to your friend and servant,

JNO. TRUMBULL.

The presidential election was now fast approaching. General Washington having declined a third nomination, Mr. Adams and Mr. Pinckney were named by the federal party as their candidates for President and Vice President. As Washington's determination had not been certainly known except by a few, until the publication of his farewell address in September, the opposition had, during this last summer, broken ground openly against him. Pamphlets and papers teemed with personal abuse, and his whole life, military and civil, was attacked without discrimination. In this warfare, Callender, a Scotch fugitive from justice, and Thomas Paine, both of whom it has been proved were subsidized by Jefferson, were conspicuous. The torrent of party spirit, however, changed its course, when it was known that he was no longer a candidate for reëlection.

Mr. Adams had, from the time of Washington's illness in 1791, been a standing mark for the friends of Mr. Jefferson, as a formidable rival. It was supposed that these attacks had, by this time, sufficiently undermined his popularity to render his success more than doubtful, and when Washington's intention was made public, the election of Jefferson was confidently expected. Wolcott thus alludes to this idea:

[a] Col. Trumbull was 5th Commissioner or umpire, under the 6th Article of the treaty of London, and discharged his responsible duties with an impartiality, ability and good sense, that secured the esteem of every one.

"When President Washington announced his intention of retiring from the government, the Virginia oligarchy entertained no doubt of being able to accomplish the election of Mr. Jefferson as his successor; and their calculations on this subject were founded on grounds apparently certain. It was known to a few, that the President had reluctantly consented to be a candidate for a second election, and the inference that he would decline a third was almost certain. The popularity of Mr. Adams, who from official situation and other circumstances, was the most prominent candidate on the federal side, had been systematically assailed; while the popularity of Mr. Jefferson had been as systematically nourished."[a]

Mr. Adams, to borrow a recent French phrase, was an "inevitable" candidate of the federal party. He had been an early, an honest, and an unflinching supporter of the revolution; he had represented the country abroad with fidelity and zeal, if not with tact and prudence; he was known to be attached to the existing institutions of government, and generally believed to maintain the views and opinions of the federalists; he had, moreover, served for eight years as the second executive officer of the nation, and had from that reason alone, forcible claims to advancement; he was fitted, at least by experience and attainments, for the presidency; and lastly, he was from Massachusetts, which was in fact the citadel of the one system as Virginia was of the other. There were, however, those in the federal ranks who entertained doubts of Mr. Adams' fitness in some essential particulars. He was thought by them to be deficient in coolness, judgment, and in consistency; and they feared that the strength of his prejudices, and the violence of his temper, rendered him particularly unfit in the then critical state of affairs. The result unfortunately justified their apprehensions.

[a] Extract from a paper written some time afterwards.

It should be remarked, that some of these gentlemen were desirous that the votes of the north should be cast equally for Mr. Pinckney and Mr. Adams, and that the election of the former as President, by his receiving a greater number of southern votes over his fellow candidate, would not have been displeasing to them. The knowledge of this by Mr. Adams afterwards led to serious results. Wolcott, though aware of this distrust, favored the choice of Mr. Adams. He believed that the will of the party generally, demanded his election to the first office; that no other candidate could be successful, and he *then*, at least, thought that the risk of unsoundness was preferable to the certain consequences which would have attended the election of Jefferson.[a]

On the part of the anti-federalists, Mr. Burr was the most prominent of the various candidates for the Vice Presidency. Some of the causes which at this time prevented his receiving more united support from them, are intimated in the following extract from the same paper with the preceding.

"The character which Mr. Burr acquired with the leaders of his own party, during the period of his service in the Senate of the United States, was fully delineated in the year 1794, in a convivial moment, by a public character from Virginia, in terms of nearly the following import:

'The two most efficient actors on the political theatre of our country, are Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Burr; and as a friend to the interests of the southern states, I sincerely wish that they had both appeared on the federal side; as in this case, they must have essentially acted in concert, and but little more time and labor would have been necessary to subvert the popularity of both, than we have found necessary to employ against Hamilton alone. I have watched the movements of Mr. Burr with attention, and have discovered traits of character which sooner or later will give us much trouble. He has an unequalled talent of attaching men to his views, and forming combinations of which he is always the centre. He is determined to play a first part; he acts strenuously with us in public, but it is remarkable that in all private consultations he more frequently agrees with

[a] Wolcott, in connection with William Smith of South Carolina, prepared a pamphlet which had some celebrity at this time, under the title of "The Pretentions of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency examined, and the charges against John Adams refuted."

us in principles than in the mode of giving them effect. Mr. Burr's habits of thinking are of a military cast. His manners create him no personal enemies, and we all know that mere political animosities cease with the causes which produce them. I shall not be surprised if Mr. Burr is found, in a few years, the leader of a popular party in the northern states; and if this event ever happens, this party will subvert the influence of the southern states. Notwithstanding all the scoffing and reproaches against us as slave-holders, the cause of republicanism in this country is connected with the political ascendancy of the southern states. Freemen cannot be employed generally in laborious and servile occupations, without debasing their minds. It was a wise and profound observation of Edmund Burke, in a speech at the commencement of the war, that the people of the southern colonies were much more strongly, and with a higher and more stubborn spirit, attached to liberty than those to the northward. Such will all masters of slaves be, who are not slaves themselves.'

These sentiments of a prime agent of the Virginia party, furnish a clue by which many intricacies of our political labyrinth may be traced."

The period of this election was marked by an outrage on the part of the French minister which should have aroused some outward expression of displeasure from even his most devoted partisans. Genet had defied the President, and threatened an appeal from his decisions to the people who made him President. Adet now went one step farther, and in his final despatch, published immediately in the leading Jacobin paper, threatened the wrath of the Directory in case that people did not abandon their policy and pursue a course consonant with the wishes of France. And this, the grossest insult ever offered to a nation not yet subjugated—an open interference by another in its elections—was welcomed by the "patriots" and used by them to further the success of their candidate. Mr. Jefferson was elected Vice-President, and came within a few votes of the higher office, by the support of the men who applauded Adet and sustained his cause, and with a French minister electioneering for their candidate and the French government threatening war in case of his defeat, the "republican" party raised anew their war-cry of *British* influence.

It may be expected that some testimony will be given

in Wolcott's life of the authorship of Washington's farewell address. The only notice of it existing among his papers is the following paragraph:

"The principles which governed President Washington's administration are perspicuously detailed in the final address to the people, which he personally prepared and which passed through my hands to and from General Hamilton."

## FROM JONATHAN DAYTON.

ELIZABETHTOWN, Sept. 4th, 1796.

Dear Sir,

Will you be so obliging as to inform me whether a Surveyor-General has yet been appointed pursuant to the act of last session for that purpose, and whether it is probable that the surveys of the public lands will commence this fall. I make this enquiry, both because I deem it important to the United States that this business should be completed as far as possible in the present autumn and winter, and because there are persons of my acquaintance, both in this state and New York, who are applying to me for information upon this subject and whose journey thither depends upon that event alone.

Do you yet know, and are you at liberty to make known the President's determination as to the acceptance of the office which he now holds, for the next term of four years? All ranks of people in this state very anxiously wish that he may consent to serve still longer. There have been great apprehensions lest he would decline, but some circumstances and late intimations seem to encourage the hope that those apprehensions will not be realized. I pray to God that this hope may prove well founded, and that *that* man, whom most of all I love and respect, will permit his fellow-citizens once more at least to reëlect him.

I cannot, whilst writing in this friendly and confidential manner, forbear to express to you the satisfaction which I experienced upon learning that our Executive had recalled Mr. Monroe from France. It has been a source of continual alarm with many of the best friends of our government, lest influenced by an intemperate democratical zeal, or impelled by a desire to connect us more inseparably and exclusively to France, he should implicate us in some acts or some engagements, from which it would be difficult to extricate ourselves without very serious risks. Even in matters of etiquette merely, much will always depend upon the right disposition and prudent discretion of the Minister, to preserve his government free from unnecessary difficulties and embarrassments, and in some instances, perhaps his country from war. I am likewise much pleased with the appointment of General Pinckney as his successor. Possessing great frankness, candour, and integrity, he unites with a nice sense of honour, talents, which, though not the most brilliant, are nevertheless good and may be equally useful. Is he arrived in Philadelphia, and is it yet ascertained when and at what port he

will embark for Europe? Shall we not have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Wolcott and yourself in this place this season, for a few days at least? Mrs. Dayton joins with me in requesting that happiness and to be remembered affectionately to your lady. With the sincerest esteem, I am, dear sir, your most obedient servant,

JONA. DAYTON.

## TO JONATHAN DAYTON.

PHILA., Sept. 7, 1796.

I have received your favour of the 4th instant. No appointment of Surveyor-General has been announced, and I am not certain that any character has been designated in the President's mind. He is apprised of the importance of commencing business speedily, and you may be assured that he has not been inattentive. It is, however, a difficult matter, as you will easily believe, to find a man who will accept the office, and who unites proper qualifications with that notoriety and respectability of character which is desirable. I hope and presume that the office will be soon filled.

I can say to you, but in *confidence*, that the President will decline a reëlection. We must therefore take all the risks of a change in the interesting situation he now possesses. Your regrets on this occasion cannot exceed mine. I fear the country is not sufficiently united to make a choice by the electors. A choice by the House of Representatives would be a very unfortunate event.

It is fully ascertained that the opposition party calculate upon dividing the votes of the State of New Jersey between Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson; the majority, they say, will be for Mr. Jefferson. On what ground this opinion is formed I cannot say, though I know it to be a fact that active exertions will be made. Will you favour me with your calculation on this subject? Who do you understand is intended to be associated with Mr. Jefferson? The reports circulated here are various.

I am happy to find that the appointment of General Pinckney is likely to give satisfaction. The measure was necessary. Every day adds to the proofs which before existed of the importance of impartiality and sincerity to American politics and interests, in whatever concerns foreign powers. We must rely upon ourselves, and must manage our affairs according to our own views, or we shall be grievously deceived. I believe General Pinckney in every respect deserves the confidence you express in his favour. He is expected daily to arrive here or at New York, but at which place is uncertain. I have been overwhelmed in business every day this summer. Though my situation is unusually difficult from causes with which you are acquainted, yet I shall be successful in conducting the public business; all is now safe. It will not be possible, however, to leave the office. Mrs. Wolcott lives in a part of a farm-house in the country with the children, and is well. Whatever aristocratical principles she may have contracted by an acquaintance with me, she is obliged to conform to a style of living which will not excite the envy of the most strict democrats. She is contented,

however, and that is sufficient. If she was here, she would join me in presenting respects to yourself and Mrs. Dayton, and in thanking you for your obliging offer, which it is our misfortune not to be able to accept.

## FROM JONATHAN DAYTON.

Elizabethtown, Sept'r. 15th, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of the 8th inst. You say it is fully ascertained that the opposition party calculate upon dividing the votes of New Jersey between Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson, and upon obtaining a majority of them for the latter. If such are their expectations, you may be assured, sir, that they will be egregiously disappointed. They cannot, I am very confident, however active they may be in their exertions, procure a majority of our votes in favour of the man of Monticelli, nor is it thought with us at all probable, that he will have the suffrage of a single elector.

I cannot answer with certainty, your enquiry who is to be associated with Mr. Jefferson by his party, but I know that Chancellor Livingston has been talked of, and I do not learn that he has been as yet relinquished with a view to any other candidate. Their attachment to him, however, is not supposed to be such as to prevent their giving him up when they discover that he cannot strengthen their interest, or when they can find a man from some other middle or eastern State disposed and able to aid them more effectually. Altho' the admission of Tennessee into the Union must render Mr. Adams' success less certain than before that event, yet I persuade myself that he will have a majority of the votes of all the electors, especially if any interest can be made for him, or even a diversion brought about by good management in the State of South Carolina. Unfortunate indeed would it be, if the result of the first competition should be such as to throw the choice upon the House of Representatives.

I am happy to learn from you that the public business is extricated from the embarrassments under which it was labouring, and that "all is now safe."

How have you fulfilled our engagement at the Bank? Have you satisfied their demands by sales of six per cents. at par or under par, or by disposing of Bank shares, or have you obtained from them a further indulgence?

The appointment of a Surveyor General is anxiously expected, and will, I hope, be announced within a few days, and given to some person who will enter upon his duties without delay. If the subordinate appointments of deputies should soon be made, the lands may yet be surveyed this fall and winter, and brought into market the next autumn; but a delay of one month more in the nomination of the deputy surveyors, must occasion a year's delay in the surveys, and of consequence in the sales. Those officers and soldiers who yet hold the warrants for lands, the reward of their services, (and there are not a few in this State) are very impatient, and even murmur at their not having been enabled to locate them from the time of peace to the present day. Seventeen officers and about seventy men, lodged their warrants in my hands to be laid on the Wabash tract, set apart for the military, two or three years ago, and they received, not very

placidly, the information that after waiting eleven or twelve years, the tract to which they had turned their attention, was given up by the government to the Indians.

I mention these things to impress upon you the importance of an immediate provision for the survey and location of the lands selected for military donations, by an act of the last session; it will reconcile many meritorious persons who conceive themselves neglected and injured; it will pacify their friends who listen to their complaints and make a common cause with them, and it will be doing an act of real justice.

I hear some of them remark with pain, that the President and members have lands of their own to sell, or they would not be so neglectful in providing for the location of the military warrants, which then might come in competition with them. The fact as to many of us holding such lands being undeniable, the imputation becomes, from that circumstance, more plausible, and enforces the necessity on the part of our government to defeat, as soon as possible, the charge of neglect. With very sincere esteem, I am, sir, your most obed't. serv't.,

JONA. DAYTON.

## FROM FISHER AMES.

DEDHAM, Sept. 26, 1796.

Dear Sir,

While I have gained health by riding, I hope you and yours have not lost or impaired it by remaining at rest in Philadelphia, where indeed, the summer heat sometimes forbids rest. The chill of this season has a little deranged my relaxed system, and exposed me to suffer some languid and half sick hours in a day, for some time. I trust I shall take a new start soon, after having become hardened to the fall. I came first to Dedham and then returned for my family to Springfield, which has given me good exercise. I contemplate a trip to see Tracy and Sedgwick, but I have many doubts whether I shall effect it. I need a good deal of drilling to fit me for a winter's journey to Congress in the stage.

The address of the President is just published here, and will be read with admiration. It will serve as a signal, like dropping a hat, for the party racers to start, and I expect a great deal of noise, whipping, and spurring; money, it is very probable will be spent, some virtue and more tranquillity lost; but I hope public order will be saved. Here the horizon is clear. You will see the toasts at a feast of fraternity in Boston for M. Adet; there is an incorrectness in them and in the whole business; some good men incautiously yielded to the project which the antis set on foot, but could not execute even decently, unless their betters in character and principle, should concur. A second set followed the first, who were entrapped because they would not leave them to be mortified. This may palliate it to you and a few others, but the face of the business is bad and foolish at home and abroad.

In and near Boston, the cause of order seems to stand better than ever; but you know how changeable our sky is. I hope my successor will be a federal man, but there is danger of a trimmer. On the whole, I think Massachusetts will im-

prove in the next House, as to federalism. I even flatter myself we shall not have one democrat. W. Lyman is not countenanced by many in his district. Varnum will be displaced, it is thought, though not by Dexter. Dearborn is said to be almost the only anti in his district. Should Virginia adopt the sentiments in the President's address, and choose better men than formerly, the next House may perhaps think it a duty to aid, instead of obstructing the business of the government. With my best respects to Mrs. W., I am, dear sir, yours truly,

FISHER AMES.

P. S. I have begged of Mr. Rundle to call on Mr. Cox about my Windsor chairs, which possibly the latter may be green enough to refuse sending, unless by a command from Mrs. Wolcott. If it should be so, I request a little treasury influence. Captain Anthony will send them on.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, Oct. 3d, 1796.

Sir,

* * * The President's declining to be again elected, constitutes a most important epoch in our national affairs. The country meet the event with reluctance, but they do not feel that they can make any claim for the further services of a man who has conducted their armies through a successful war, has so largely contributed to establish a national government, has so long presided over our councils and directed the public administration, and has, in the most advantageous manner, settled all national differences, and who can leave the administration when nothing but our folly and internal discord can render the country otherwise than happy. His secession from the administration will probably, within no distant period, ascertain whether our present system and union can be preserved. It may exist a few years, but the violent symptoms which have attacked it so early, evince to my mind that it will be but of short duration. We have not the least evidence that this is the age of reason. The retirement of the President will induce among many very serious reflections, and his advice to his country, which is the best which could possibly be given, will be much read and will make a pretty strong temporary impression ; but like all other advice, however good, will not be lasting. Pride and ambition, supported by ignorance and vice, will not be confined within the limits he has prescribed.

The extreme scurrility and abuse with which the President has been treated, gives an additional proof of human baseness. Constant reiterations of this kind, suffered to pass with impunity, would lead to debase the character of an angel. As reluctant as I feel at the retirement of the President, I believe, upon reflection, it is probable he has chosen the proper time, both for himself and the country. Matters will be brought to a test. If Jefferson shall supply his place, which I trust will not be the case, however plausible his conduct will be, he never will have the northern confidence. Literary abilities and practical knowledge are not frequently conjoined, and he never will be thought to act but under the veil

of hypocrisy. The politics which he has adopted and which he will always insidiously support, are inconsistent with the honor and safety of our country, and his mind is too limited not to act under a partial bias.

* * * *

I am, &c.,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

BROOKLINE, Oct. 11, 1796.

My Dear Sir,

It is about a fortnight since I received the letter you had the goodness to write on the 9th of July, by Mr. Mercier. This gentleman put your letter into the hand of Mr. Higginson, who neglected to deliver it to me until two weeks ago. I have twice been to town for the sole purpose of finding Mr. Mercier, and at last discovered he was gone to Newburyport. If he returns to Boston, I shall be happy to see him, and to promote his views in any thing in my power.

By a vessel, now on the point of sailing for Philadelphia, (I think she is a schooner called the Industry, and the Captain's name Thomas) I have shipped a barrel of St. Germain pears, which, it is hoped, will arrive in good order, and prove acceptable to you and Mrs. Wolcott, as from Mrs. C. and me. In this climate they are easily preserved till December and January, and are the best winter fruit we have.

The President's advice is an excellent coronation of an excellent public life. I think it will do as much as any thing can, toward saving us from the miserable servitude to which our folly and vices seem to destine us.

Mr. J. B. Cutting tells us that the French successes in Italy will entirely secure the election of Mr. Jefferson. France, he says, must be appeased, by our making the President she likes. If the report be true that she has a powerful fleet at Halifax, I imagine Mr. Cutting's opinion will be adopted by many, who have always considered, and some of them desired, that our national *independence* should *depend* on France.

Mr. Quincy tells me he saw you and Mrs. Wolcott, and that you, with your little ones were all well, ten days since. Mrs. Cabot is in good health, and joins most cordially in my prayers that you may long be happy. Yours truly,

G. CABOT.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, October 17th, 1796.

I have received your several letters, and am glad to know that I have been anticipated in my apology for not replying to them.

The present is truly a critical epoch in our affairs; if the elections are favourable, all will be safe; if unfavourable, French democracy may prevail, in which case all will be lost.

The candidates for President and Vice President will be Mr. Adams and Mr. Thomas Pinckney on one side, and Mr. Jefferson and Col. Burr on the other. The antis, however, do not expect that Col. Burr will succeed, and they secretly wish that Mr. Adams may be elected to his present station. They will vote against him, however, to prevent his election to the office of President. It is expected that Mr. Adams will decline, if not chosen President. This will enable them to impute ambition and resentment to him, and the public will in any event lose his influence and services in the Senate. It will, besides, give the party an opportunity of stimulating the ambition of some Northern character to coöperate in their schemes. It is of the utmost moment that Mr. Adams and Mr. Pinckney should both be elected. This, I expect, may be accomplished ; but system in the Northern States will be necessary. It has been apprehended that Mr. Pinckney may be elected President; of this there may be a degree of risk, though I am satisfied that it is not desired by Mr. Pinckney's most intimate and influential friends. The votes may be calculated as follows :

For the Federal candidates, all the votes of the five eastern States, except those allowed for accidents, all New York, New Jersey and Delaware, one half of Pennsylvania and Maryland, and about four chance votes to the southward for Mr. Adams, and perhaps seven or eight for Mr. Pinckney. This result would place Mr. Pinckney President, and Mr. Adams Vice President. To guard against this, some of the votes which might be obtained for Mr. Pinckney, may be given to an indifferent character ; care must be taken, however, that such a number is not thrown away as would leave Mr. Jefferson President or Vice President. Measures have been taken here to ascertain the complexion of the electors as soon as possible. It will be best that the preponderating voice in favour of Mr. Adams, should be given in the middle States ; if Mr. Pinckney should lose the election for want of support at the eastward, a distrust may be excited which both now and hereafter may be very prejudicial. You will see, therefore, that in my opinion, the eastern States ought to support both gentlemen fairly and impartially. It is possible that the event may be different from our wishes, but it will be the fault of the constitution if such be the case.

The French are assuming a very haughty tone, and will, if possible, dictate submission to the world. The late order against neutral nations may not be precisely as has been published, but it is certain that something offensive and injurious has been adopted. A new minister, said to be Mangourit, lately one of Genet's consuls, is expected. The violence of this man's character, if he has been in fact appointed, is no good omen.[a] The French are practising every species of seduction to divide this country, but they will be detected and defeated. What I most fear is, that by the terms of peace which they mean to dictate, they may gain a footing on this continent. If they succeed, we shall find they will be the worst and most dangerous neighbours we could have. With England we may now and then have a war, which though a bad thing is not the worst thing possi-

[a] Adet was to have been recalled in August and Mangourit sent as Charge only, but on Mr. Monroe's remonstrance the appointment was not made, and Adet's actual recall did not take place till November. See Monroe's "View of the Conduct of the Executive," p. 360.

ble. The French will, if they have an opportunity, be like ants and weasels in our barns and granaries. Out of pure love to us and to liberty, they will put our property and interests into a common stock with their own, and will then assume the sole management of both. In short, we shall be in danger of being first corrupted, and afterwards enslaved.

The probability of absolute success on the part of France is great; the avarice of England has tempted her to divide her force, and of course to make establishments disproportioned to her population. A wound to her commerce, now the sole basis of her strength, may be a death blow to the nation. If the United States can be wise and united, we may derive strength from the calamities which afflict mankind. The arts, the commerce, and the wealth of Europe, may be rapidly transplanted here. This strength, though not to be desired by means incompatible with justice and humanity, is an advantage which happily may be purchased by means compatible with both.

## The subject of the sale of prizes by French national ships, as distinct from privateers, continued to be a subject of discussion.

### TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 17, 1796.

Permit me to ask your opinion on the following points:—

1st. Ought we, or ought we not, to permit sales of prizes to French *national* ships of war as formerly, on payments of duties?

2d. In case of an affirmative answer to the first question, what is to be regarded as evidence of a national ship—will the certificate of a French Commissioner in the West Indies, or of a Consul or the French minister in the United States, be sufficient, provided nothing appears in the commission of the vessel contradictory to their certificate.

3rd. May we keep an Inspector on board a prize during her continuance in our ports?

4th. In case a prize requires reparation, may a *part* of her cargo be sold, sufficient to defray expenses on payment of duties?

5th. In case a prize vessel is condemned as incapable of reparation, may the prize goods be exported in our own or other neutral vessels, as French property?

6th. Who is to judge when it is necessary to unlade a vessel for the purpose of making reparations? Is the suggestion of a French prize master or consul sufficient?

7th. May the cargoes of prizes be sold or any part of them, for the reparation of any vessel, or the payment of any expense not incidental to the identical vessel in which the cargoes arrived?

8th. Who is to judge of the quantity sufficient for making reparations, in case any sale is lawful?

9th. If, after a vessel is condemned as incapable of reparation, she should be notwithstanding repaired, is she to be permitted to depart?

10th. Is it, or is it not, the right of a Collector to treat French prizes in the same manner as vessels which report themselves as bound to a foreign port, or which arrive in distress? See Section 18th and 38th of the Collection Law.

The 18th and 38th sections of the Collection Law appear to have provided for cases not very dissimilar from those of prizes to privateers, which in contemplation of law, must be considered as coming into our ports merely for refreshment; the requiring of a bond on their departure may not, however, be proper.

We shall, on the subject of these prizes be vexed with every kind of uncandid ingenuity. There is danger of losing the revenue, while at the same time sales may not be prevented. You will see that not only public questions which affect our neutrality, but revenue questions are concerned; there are too many who will not miss a good opportunity of purchasing West India produce, when it can be had below the market price.

In every point of view the subject is embarrassing. Please to reply as soon as possible.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

NEW HAVEN, Oct. 22d, 1796.

Sir,

Mr. Tracy is chosen senator, vice Mr. Trumbull; Mr. J. Hillhouse is re-elected to serve from the third of March. The present representatives and Mr. Dana are elected for the fifth Congress. Mr. Davenport is elected representative till next March, vice Mr. Hillhouse. This criss-cross election is probably owing to a confusion in the minds of many freemen, who supposed it would be improper for them to vote for the same person twice, at the same time. A new writ of election will soon issue, when probably both these gentlemen will be elected to supply the existing vacancies.

Nothing material has been transacted yet in the session. I shall hope to write to you again before I leave the town. I am, &c.,

OLIV. WOLCOTT.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

ALBANY, Oct. 27, 1796.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 17th instant found me at Albany, attending the Supreme Court. I have no copy of the treaty with Great Britain at hand, but I am well satisfied from memory that the true interpretation of that treaty, enforcing in this respect the true rule of neutrality, forbids our permitting the sale of a prize taken and brought in by a French national ship, equally as if by a privateer, and that the prize vessel herself, with her cargo, ought to depart our ports. I hasten to give you my opinion thus far. I reserve to consider more at leisure, what exceptions absolute necessity may justify; but this is clear, that as far as it may admit

any, the exceptions must be measured and restricted by the necessity, and as soon as possible you must return into the path of the treaty. Thus, if the prize vessel was absolutely unfit to proceed to sea, her cargo ought to be sent out of the country in another vessel, and care ought to be taken that it does not go out under false colors. Our own officers, no doubt, must inspect and ascertain any case of necessity which may be suggested.

Pray, my good friend, let there be no evasions. Yours, affectionately,

A. HAMILTON.

New York, Nov. 1, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I wrote you a line from Albany, expressing an opinion from memory, that our treaty with Great Britain prohibited the sale of prizes made by French national ships. Being just returned to town, I have looked into the article which relates to the point, and I *fear* that opinion was wrong. In a day or two I will write you more particularly.

Adet's late communication demands a very careful and well managed answer. Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, Nov. 1, 1796.

I have received your letters from Hartford and New Haven, and am glad to hear of the issue of our elections. The services of good men were never more needed than at present.

*Inter nos* there is good reason to believe that the French have got a cession of Louisiana and the Floridas from Spain. The object is to have the means of influence over the western country.

There is something very unintelligible in the movements of France towards this country. Whether they really mean to distress our commerce generally, or only to excite alarm for the purpose of influencing the approaching election, is uncertain. I hope all will turn out right.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

New York, Nov. 3, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I have more carefully examined our treaty with Great Britain, and I return to the opinion given you from Albany. My hesitation yesterday, arose from the terms of the 24th article, which were confined to *privateers*, a word that has an appropriate sense, meaning ships of private persons commissioned to cruise. But the following article contains the equivalent one to that with France, upon which we refused all bringing in and sale of prizes by her enemies. The words are "no refuge," &c., the *major* including the *minor*. And though France, by

our treaty with her, may *bring in* prizes, yet the treaty gives her no right *to sell*. The clause in question in the English treaty cannot take away the right she before had to bring in her prizes; but as she had not a positive right to sell, it will oblige her to depart with them. In other words, it will preclude her from whatever she has not a positive right to. This, also, is Mr. Jay's opinion, and it is certainly agreeable to the whole spirit of the treaty. Yours,

A. H.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 6, 1796.

I am inclined to think that your opinion of Nov. 3rd, is founded on a partial view of the case.

You know that it has all along been a received opinion that the French had a right by treaty, to an indefinite asylum for their ships; but that they could not claim, as a right, the privilege of selling prizes in our ports. The right to an indefinite asylum was also granted to British ships of war and letters of marque, provided they had not made prizes of French vessels. On this ground the 25th article of the British treaty cannot be construed to impair the right of an asylum accorded by our prior treaty with France.

The right of selling prizes stands on different grounds; it might have been refused, in all cases, to France; it was, however, *granted* in all cases. The British treaty, however, has taken away this privilege from privateers; but it leaves the other cases of prizes to *national ships*, as formerly. The United States may take away this right of selling prizes wholly; but they have passed no law on the subject. What the President does must be consistent with his former decisions, or be sanctioned by some subsequent law. There is no law on the point, and according to all former decisions a stipulation affecting privateers, has not been deemed to affect national ships. It is remarkable that the 25th article, stipulating against an asylum, is the very article by which the rights acquired under the French treaty are saved—this will be much abridged if your opinion should prevail, which, though I very much wish to see established, is, I fear, liable to insuperable objections.

There was no enclosure in your letter. Have we done right in respect to Mr. Adet's note? I wish to know, as we may hear more on the subject.

The Pennsylvania election has, I think, issued in favour of Mr. Jefferson; there is yet *hope*, but that is all.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

[NEW YORK,] Nov. 9, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I received yesterday your letter of the 6th, and immediately wrote some additional letters to the eastward, enforcing what I had before written. Pennsylvania does not surprise me.

I have reconsidered the opinion given to you on the 3rd, and see no reason to change it. The reasoning which leads me to the conclusion, has not been sufficiently explained. I will therefore be more particular.

The articles in our treaty with France, which respect the subject, are the 17th and 22d. The 17th consists of two parts. 1st. It grants *asylum* in our ports for French ships of war and privateers, with their prizes, and with liberty to carry them freely thence to their own ports. 2d. It prohibits the giving refuge in our ports to such as shall have made prizes of the subjects or property of the French. It grants no right to sell prizes in our ports, neither does the *letter* of the article prohibit *prizes* made of the French from coming into our ports; it only prohibits the *instrument* of making the prizes. But the construction justly adopted by the President, was that the prohibition, in its true spirit, excluded the bringing in of prizes, whether coming with or without the capturing vessels. It is upon this part of the treaty alone that prizes made by national vessels of Great Britain were excluded from our ports. For the 22d article with France is wholly confined to privateers, prohibiting those of other nations to fit or sell their prizes in our ports. This article, if it had stood alone, would have left us free to admit British *national* ships, with their prizes, into our ports, as our 24th article with Great Britain leaves us free to admit French national ships with their prizes, for these articles are the exact equivalent of each other. So that, as before remarked, the prohibition to the coming in or sale in our ports of prizes made upon the French by British national armed ships, was derived by construction and implication from the 17th article of our treaty with France.

It follows then that this article was considered as competent to prevent the coming in and sale of prizes. If so, the same or equivalent terms, in the British treaty, must be competent to the same thing. Now the 25th article of our treaty with Great Britain has equivalent terms. We there read that "no shelter or refuge shall be given in their ports, to such as have made a prize upon the subjects or citizens of either of the contracting parties; but if forced by stress of weather or the dangers of the sea, to enter therein, particular care shall be taken to cause them to retire as soon as possible." This prohibition includes here, as in the 17th article of our treaty with France, a prohibition to sell prizes in our ports; not the prizes of privateers only, but prizes generally.

But France, it is answered, had a prior right by the 17th article of our treaty with her, "to come and bring prizes into our ports." True, she had this right, and must have it still, notwithstanding the 25th article of our treaty with Great Britain; but she had no prior right by treaty to sell prizes in our ports, and consequently, as the 25th article of our treaty with Great Britain excludes, as the *minor* of a *major*, the selling of prizes in our ports, the exclusion so far is in force, because it contravenes no prior right of France. As far as the treaty with France gives a right inconsistent with the above 25th article, that right forms an exception, but the exception must be coextensive with the right. The conclusion is that France retains the right of *asylum*, but is excluded from the right of selling. This gives effect to the 25th article with Great Britain as far as the treaty right of France does not require an exception; and this construction ought to be favoured, because it best comports with the rule of neutrality. It will also best

agree with the President's former decisions. He permitted France to sell prizes; not because the treaty gave her a right, but because he did not see clearly any law of the country or of nations that forbade it. But consistency does not require that this permission shall continue, if there be any thing in the treaty with Great Britain against it. Consistency, however, does require that the same latitude of construction should be given to the 25th article of the treaty with Great Britain, as was before given to the 17th article of our treaty with France. The same latitude will, as I apprehend, exclude the sale of prizes by France in the case in question.

I regret extremely the publication of the reply to Adet, otherwise than through the channel of Congress. The sooner the Executive gets out of the newspapers the better. What may now be in its power, will depend on circumstances which are to occur. Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

## FROM FISHER AMES.

Dedham, Nov. 14, 1796.

Dear Sir,

You would deceive yourself, if you suppose I rate the value of your correspondence exactly in proportion to the promptness of my replies. Your letter of the 6th October is my daily remembrancer? I look at it to see how our republic is like to fare. I perceive that Philadelphia and its environs have decided the votes for Jeffersonians. I have supposed that Pennsylvania held the balance, and I am sorry to infer from the votes of Philadelphia that it will be wrongly inclined. I have long seen with terror that our destiny is committed to our prudence, which I have ever believed to be weaker than our prejudice and passion; yet the issue, such as it is, must be tried *by the country*. Here the influence of the Boston Chronicle and the orations in the market, is most pestiferous, I have proclaimed open war against all this, but a rower against the stream soon grows weak and weary. All that is folly and passion in man, is opposed to all that is virtue and wisdom; and I fear that our government supposes him too good, and will prove him too weak for the trust. Good men, and especially those of Connecticut, where folly is not in fashion, do not know the extent of the lies against the government. Many of my plain neighbours who read the Chronicle will not commend the President. Their reasoning is from what they know, and they take facts from that paper. Yet at the same time I see the men of sense more zealously in the right than ever. Yet as the seekers of popularity are corrupters of the multitude, the malady is endemical and incurable. I went to the meeting in this place; almost every gentleman was there and acted with me; but a word about liberty and putting bridles in the people's mouth routed us all, altho' we were very cautious on that tender ground. In a word, my dear sir, I am far from clear as to the event of things; as to the duty of public men, I have no doubts. We are to persevere and hold up the government and the constituted authorities as long as we can. I have my anxiety much engaged to know the extent of Adet's threats. I think our public will cling to the govern-

ment, if it should proceed with proper spirit. Any hesitancy would spoil all. I know little of the popular impression of the correspondence. Col. Dawes is elector, and H. G. Otis representative for this district. Yours, &c.,

FISHER AMES.

I thank you for continuing to hope for my republic. I am far from stout, but I am slowly making progress. I expect to reach Philadelphia before the 5th December.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Hartford, November 15, 1796.

Sir,

I received your letter by Juba, and the enclosures for Mr. Davenport. I shall forward by next mail. We are much obliged by the trouble you have taken about Peggy.

Col. Hamilton sent Col. Wadsworth an extract of a letter by Friday's mail from your son, which informs us that the federal ticket for electors was lost in Pennsylvania. His opinion has since been confirmed by private letters. Our hopes are a little revived by papers last evening, as in the account they contain, the federal ticket leads. The returns of the western and some other districts were not received, which probably will turn the scale for Jefferson. This, if it happens, will render the election more critical, but not desperate. The votes in Massachusetts for electors are so scattered, that little can be known about them at present. Since Governor Adams' defeat, it is an universal opinion that the Vice-President will have all the votes. Present appearances are that Skinner and Varnum will be the only anti-federal representatives from New England in the next Congress. William Lyman has but few votes, except in Springfield. It is not ascertained whether General Shepard be chosen or not. Foster, Sewall and Otis are chosen. 'Tis said Mr. Dearborn has lost his election; we have not heard about the others.

The Daily Advertiser from New York, of last evening, has an account (via Baltimore) from Dutch papers, of further and decisive defeats of Jourdan's and Moreau's divisions of the French armies. As yet the account stands single, and wants additional intelligence. Among other instances of the cullability of a certain class of our countrymen to the French, it is reported that the supporters of the Jefferson ticket as 'tis named, went to the polls with French cockades in their hats at Philadelphia. I can't vouch for the truth of this story. The mob of that city, led on by their knavish purse-proud democrats, are ripe for any outrage upon decency and a government of laws. It is probable that nothing but some calamity from the hands of Sans Culottism can thoroughly reform them. It was nothing but the yellow fever checked the dominion of Genet in that city—the western insurrection held them at bay a while, and I hope and trust there is some seeming calamity in the stores of heaven to laugh at and correct them, now that their pride and folly have come. This government yet rests on New England prudence and firmness; it is a tower that hitherto has abode in strength

under the smiles of a good Providence, and I confidently believe that it will not hereafter disappoint the wishes and hopes of the virtuous. I am, sir, with sincere attachment and great respect, your obedient humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 17, 1796.

You must feel interested in knowing how our affairs stand with France. I give you a summary of them.

The note to Col. Pickering contains a summary of all the complaints of France since the commencement of the present war. They are as follows:

That the courts of the United States have taken cognizance of prizes to French vessels.

That the treaty has been misconstrued by permitting the admission of British ships which have at *some time* made prizes of French vessels. M. Adet's construction is, that a British ship which at any time or in any place has made a prize, ought to be denied asylum.

Complaints are made of the proclamation of neutrality, and of the *promptness* with which the President requested Congress to enact laws for preserving our neutrality. The questions proposed by the President before Genet's arrival, are recited at length, and commented on as evidences of unfriendliness to France.

Lists of almost all the particular cases respecting privateers, &c., are made out, and the decisions of the Executive censured.

It is said that the government has manifested partiality against France, by the alacrity which marked its conduct in enforcing the laws against them, and by tardiness in prosecuting the British.

That the American government *deceived* France in respect to Mr. Jay's treaty.

That the treaty with Great Britain is a violation of the treaty with France; is equivalent to a treaty of alliance, and ought not to have been made during the war.

A fulfilment of the 11th article of our treaty with France is required, which stipulates that favours granted to other nations shall become common. This, M. Adet says, will justify the French in taking British property on board of American vessels, and in excluding contraband as defined by the British treaty.

For these reasons the commercial relations, founded on treaty, are to be suspended until the government "returns to itself." Nevertheless the French nation regards *the people* as its friends.

The people in a declamatory rhapsody are directly addressed in the style "O ye Americans." An appeal is made to their passions, the injuries of the British during the last war are recounted, and the assistance of the French nation extolled. It is said that the suspension of the minister's functions is not to be regarded as an act of hostility, but of just resentment against the *government*. When the government *returns to itself*, the French will forget the injury.

France is said to be terrible to its enemies, but magnanimous to its friends; quick to resent injuries, but easily appeased.

The Executive and Mr. Jay are treated with personal indignity.

On the whole, this is by far the boldest attempt to govern this country which has been made. It is necessary to come to an issue. Measures to prevent any panic or depression of the public opinion are necessary. We have the right of the question, but whether we shall be overruled by force, will partly depend on the spirit of the people, partly on the issue of the campaign in Italy and Germany.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, November 19th, 1796.

I duly received your letter of the 4th instant. Myself and family are now well. The issue of the Pennsylvania election is not known; but though hopes are entertained that the federal ticket may prevail, I think the contrary most probable. Various causes have conspired to produce this effect, such as jealousy of New England, toryism, democracy, and folly; but these would have been insufficient without the publication of M. Adet's note. If Mr. Jefferson is elected it will be owing entirely to the influence of this paper.

The conduct of France, though apparently mysterious, admits of an explanation. It has been for some time certain that the United States are averse to engaging in the present war. It has been constantly said by the democrats, that the treaty with England was adopted under the influence of fear, and the French have been invited to try the effect of threats in order to maintain the influence of their party. The real wants of the French coterics, and the insolence inspired by uncommon success, have rendered the French but too willing to adopt this advice which they are now pursuing with a boldness without example, except in the annals of the French Revolution.

M. Adet has notified the Secretary of State that his functions are suspended. The pretexts are of an extraordinary nature. The proclamation of neutrality, the act of Congress in support of that neutrality, the decisions of the Executive and Judiciary are censured in the most rude and severe terms. The relations founded on treaty, are declared to be at an end until these acts are rescinded and till the government reverts to itself. The people are spoken of with affection, and it is regretted that they should suffer, but they are told that it is not France, but their government which should be censured. In short, I understand that it is made an ultimatum that certain acts and decisions in which the three branches of our government have concurred, must be rescinded or France will not be satisfied. What is the consequence of non compliance is uncertain, perhaps much will depend on the result of the battles to be fought in Italy and Germany.

It is of the greatest importance that the public mind should not be discouraged. If the people are firm, we shall succeed; otherwise this country will be governed by a domestic faction supported by foreign influence.

Mr. Jefferson will not be elected President if the eastern states support Mr. Adams and Mr. Pinckney; but which of the last will succeed is now uncertain.

M. Adet's conduct will perhaps make such impressions on wavering federalists at the southward as to incline the chance in favour of Mr. Pinckney. This certainly is far from being proper or what is best, as Mr. Adams ought on many grounds to be preferred, but risks must be incurred rather than favour the election of Mr. Jefferson. I hope Connecticut will support both equally and leave the issue to Providence. Mr. Pinckney is an honest man and cannot be made the tool or dupe of faction. Mr. Adams has the superior claims of age, station, firmness, and understanding, and it will hurt our public character and betray levity and ingratitude if he is not elected. The election of Mr. Jefferson, I consider as fatal to our independence, now that the interference of a foreign nation in our affairs is no longer disguised.

You will probably see M. Adet's note in the papers in a few days.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, Nov. 21st, 1796.

Sir,

The present situation of our country presents a more scandalous view than is often recorded in history. Most powerful and formidable factions contend whether they shall not be governed by foreign councils rather than their own. I question whether the impudent pretensions of Russia and Prussia, to preserve the liberties of Poland, were equal to the claims and exertions of the French to influence and control the administration and property of the United States.

The declaration of Adet, by order of the French Directory, made in the first instance to the public, it is said has been received by the middle and southern states with satisfaction, and with a determination to gratify France with an administration which will accord with its wishes.

I never believed that our present system of government or union would be very permanent; but I never could have believed that a people who had so recently gone through the distresses of a revolution, and risen from a state of almost extreme poverty, into an affluence more real than that of any other nation, could so soon have forgot their sufferings as wantonly to sport with the enjoyment of the greatest social happiness and expose the continuance of it to the utmost hazard. The conduct of these states for some time past, exhibits a melancholy proof of the folly and depravity of mankind. The energy of the French influence soon after their revolution began, especially operated in the southern and western parts of the Union. The first impression of Genet was made in these regions, and they have ever since then been particularly attended to by his successors and their adherents. If the French arms continue to predominate, and a governing influence of this nation shall continue in the southern and western countries, I am confident, and indeed hope, that a separation will soon take place; and I am very sure that the northern people will never submit (but by the event of a war) to the domination of a foreign power, whether open or insidious. Of all policies which ever existed among mankind, the French is the worst.

It is said that the anti-federal or Jeffersonian ticket strongly predominates, if not universally, in Pennsylvania and Maryland, and that the events of the general

elections are very precarious. I shall believe, until I am otherwise informed, that Mr. Jefferson will not be elected President; as I do not think he will have a single vote north of the Delaware, and it will be strange indeed, if upon this calculation he shall have enough south of it to bring him in.

This mode of electing a President will probably operate finally, pretty much like a Polish election, and produce the same effects. If Mr. Jefferson had but a small share of that good sense which some attribute to him, he would refuse to be a candidate. He may be assured that his hypocrisy and plausibility can never deceive the northern people; that they never will have any confidence in him, and that he never will be able to gratify his adherents unless he does what will produce a renunciation of his administration.

I never heard any one censure the President for declining after the present session, the national administration. The length and vast importance of his administration from the commencement, entitled him to repose if he chose it. No one ought to insist upon his services, however apparently necessary; but I have to regret that he will not in retirement enjoy the comfort which every good man wishes he might. It will be out of his power not to feel equal solicitude for his country as when in the administration, and it is my fervent wish that it may not by untoward events be increased. I wish to hear from you the state of your health and family, and the probable event of the election. I am &c.,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Nov. 22, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for the note sending me Adet's letter. The present is, in my opinion, as critical a situation as our government has been in; requiring all its prudence, all its wisdom, all its moderation, all its firmness.

Though the thing is now passed, I do not think it useless to say that I was not well pleased with the Secretary of State's answer to Adet's note communicating the order respecting neutral vessels. There was something of hardness and epigrammatic sharpness in it. Neither did I think the position true, that France had no right to inquire respecting the affair of seamen. I am of opinion that whenever a neutral power suffers liberties to be taken with it by a belligerent one, which turns to the detriment of the other belligerent party, as the acquiring strength by impressing seamen, there is good ground of inquiry, demanding candid explanation. My opinion is, that our communications should be calm, reasoning, and serious, showing steady resolution more than feeling, having force in the idea, rather than in the expression.

I am very anxious that our government should do right on the present occasion. My ideas are these:

As Adet has declared his functions suspended, the reply ought not to be to him, but through Mr. Pinckney to the Directory.

It ought to contain a review of our conduct from the beginning, noticing our first and full acknowledgement of the republic, and the danger we run by it;

also, the danger we incurred by other large interpretations of the treaty in favour of France, adverting to the sale of prizes.

It should meet all the suggestions of the Minister, correct his misstatements of facts, and meet argumentatively his principles. Where arguments already used are repeated, it ought to be in new language, or by quotations in the body of the reply—not by reference to other communications, annexed or otherwise, which embarrass the reader's attention.

It should review calmly the conduct of France and her agents, pointing out fully and clearly the violations of our rights and the spirit which was manifested, but in terms the most cautious and inoffensive.

It should advert to the policy of moderation towards the enemies of France, which our situations and that of France, especially as to maritime powers, imposed upon us.

It should briefly recapitulate the means of obtaining redress from Great Britain, employed by our government, and the effects they have produced.

It should explain why the government could not safely adopt more expeditious modes; why the Executive could not control the judiciary; and should show that in effect the opposite party, as well as France, suffered the inconveniences of delay.

It should make prominent the consequences upon the peace and friendship of governments, if all accidental infractions from situation, from the negligences, &c., of particular officers, are to be imputed with severity to the government itself; and should apply the remark to the case of the injuries we have suffered in different ways from the officers and agents of France.

It should make prominent two ideas: the situation in which we were with Great Britain prior to the last treaty, so as to show, that by the law of nations as admitted to us, and declared to France and the world prior to that treaty, all the things complained of as resulting from that treaty, previously existed; and it should dwell on the exception in that treaty of prior treaties.

It should point out strongly the idea, that the inconvenience at particular junctures of particular stipulations, is no reason for one party superseding them; but should intimate that the President is willing to review the relations between the two countries, and by a new treaty, if the same shall be approved by the Senate, to readjust the terms of those nations.

The article in the treaty with France, respecting an admission of the same privileges which are granted to other powers, should be examined. This plainly means where there is any *concession* of a positive privilege which the United States were free to refuse, not when there is a mere recognition of the principles of the laws of nations.

It should be made prominent that the United States have always wished, and still wish to cultivate the most amicable relations, and are still disposed to evince this disposition by every method in their power. That in what they have said, they mean only to show that they have acted with sincerity and good faith, and have rather received than given cause to complain. That they have been disposed to make a candid construction of circumstances which might seem inconsistent with a friendly conduct in France, and claim a similar candour in the estimate of their situation and conduct.

There should be an animadversion upon the unfitness of looking beyond the government to the citizens.

And there should be these ideas properly couched: that the United States cannot admit that a just cause of resentment has been given; that they appeal from the misapprehension which dictated this sentiment to the justice and magnanimity of France for a retraction of it, and for meeting them freely in the complete restoration of friendly intercourse; that France will not deliberately expect that they could make a sacrifice of self-respect, since she must be sensible that a free people ought in every event to cherish it as a sacred duty, and to encounter with firmness every danger and calamity which an attempt to make them forget it, or degrade them from their independent character, may involve.

This would be the general complexion of the reply which I would give. The manner should be extremely cautious, smooth, even friendly, but yet solemn and dignified.

The alliance in its future operation must be against our interest. The door to escape from it is opened.

Though we ought to maintain with good faith our engagements, if the conduct of the other party releases us, we should not refuse the release, so far as we may accept without compromitting our peace. This idea is very important. Yours,

A. H.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA., Nov. 27, 1796.

I have the pleasure to reply to your letter of November 21st. The anti-federal ticket has succeeded in this state except in respect to two persons, one of whom is of somewhat doubtful principles. Many persons have supposed that the proclamation ought to have been issued on a certain day fixed by law, when the result would have been different. How this point really is, I will not undertake to say, although it is certain that different declarations have been made to different persons by the Governor, and that his whole conduct has borne marks of finesse and partiality. The returns of the county have not yet been received; it is said that their probable effect would have been the election of the two anti-federalists now excluded. I have some reason to think that measures are in contemplation for obtaining these returns before the first Wednesday of December, when a new proclamation may be issued, or at least the votes of the excluded persons taken returned with a special statement to Congress. There is no injustice in supposing that Dallas, who is the real Governor, would be pleased with occasioning a disputed election of President.

The votes of the city and county of Philadelphia afforded a majority of two thousand against Mr. Adams; the state of the poll through the state, exclusive of the transmontane counties, afforded an entire balance in his favour of more than three thousand votes; the ticket has been lost by the votes of the insurgent counties and the city and county of Philadelphia.

As for the western counties they have acted according to their nature, and are not to be censured; the conduct of the city fills me with chagrin and indignation. Many men who have been considered as friends to the government, yielded on this occasion, and publicly assigned as their reason, THAT THE ELECTION OF MR. JEFFERSON WAS NECESSARY TO PREVENT A RUPTURE WITH FRANCE!!! This reason had a powerful influence with the Quakers; motives more base, if possible, governed others. It is publicly affirmed in many companies, that the indications of bribery were unequivocal. I have been informed in a most direct, and as I conceive, authentic manner, that M. ADET HAS SAID THAT THE FUTURE CONDUCT OF FRANCE TOWARDS THIS COUNTRY, WOULD BE INFLUENCED BY THE RESULT OF OUR ELECTION. This execrable issue of the election has been owing to State vanity. The majority of the last legislature was federal, and the antis were desirous of having the electors chosen by districts. This would have divided the vote of Pennsylvania, and left the general result favourable. The conceit of holding the balance between the parties, and deciding who should be the President, was, however, too tempting to be resisted. A die has been cast for the whole fortune of our country, and the game most probably is lost. It is the misfortune of this State that talents and integrity are rarely found in alliance.

The vote of Delaware will be favourable to Mr. Adams; Maryland will give seven votes for and three against him; Virginia is expected to give two, and possibly four; North Carolina one, and South Carolina three. All the residue will be decidedly against him.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The smallest number of votes required is - - - | | 70 |
| It is hoped the States east of Pennsylvania will be unanimous, | 58 | |
| In Pennsylvania we calculate on - - - - | 2 | |
| In Delaware, - - - - - - | 3 | |
| In Maryland, - - - - - - | 7 | |
| In Virginia, - - - - - - | 2 | |
| In North Carolina, - - - - - - | 1 | |
| In South Carolina, - - - - - | 3 | |
| Total expected, - - - - - - | | 76 |

It is to be observed that all the States will appoint electors, and that a majority of the electors *appointed*, not a majority of those who *vote*, is required by the Constitution. The *absence* of any person who would have voted for Mr. Adams will therefore be equivalent to a vote for Mr. Jefferson, by tending to refer the choice of President to the House of Representatives.

It is said with confidence here in the conclaves of the antis, that Mr. Jefferson will have several votes east of Pennsylvania. Whether there is any ground for the assertion I know not. You may rest assured, however, that no means of influence will be neglected, and that M. Adet is well informed of most public characters. His notes may frighten some; they may be assigned as a means to cover motives not to be avowed; in short, folly and wickedness may alike be found enemies in this contest.

The calculation of seventy-six votes in favour of Mr. Adams, is the highest which can be made. I do not, however, expect any votes in South Carolina.

Many of the best men will exert all their influence, but as the back country is anti-federal, as the Rutledge family and their powerful connections are disgusted, and as the electors are to be chosen by the legislature, I do not see why three votes are to be expected. It is most likely that the vote will be uniform.

In North Carolina one man has been elected who has declared he would vote for Mr. Adams; but I understand that he is a man of no consideration. The people of the State are ignorant and fickle, their wishes may change on hearing of Adet's note; if this should happen, the vote of the elector would probably follow the opinion of his constituents. There are one or two federal candidates set up in other districts from which we have not heard, but I am told that there is but little probability that they will be elected.

In Virginia, two votes may be relied on, and there is some ground to *hope* for two others. We have heard of but six federal electors in Maryland, but it is said that seven will be chosen. Pennsylvania is uncertain, it being highly probable that some device will be practiced either to gain over the two federalists, or to defeat their votes.

Mr. Pinckney will, in South Carolina, have an unanimous vote, and possibly he may gain a few more votes than Mr. Adams in the southern States. The zealous antis will, however, endeavour to defeat his votes out of partiality for Mr. Jefferson.

Having thus stated all the facts within my knowledge, and all reasonable probabilities, it remains for the eastern States to determine what shall be done. To me, it appears of the utmost consequence to prevent the election of Mr. Jefferson as President or Vice President. In the first situation he would gradually innovate upon and fritter away the Constitution, and in the mean time there would be no confidence in the Executive. In the second situation he would become the rallying point of faction and French influence; he would probably reside at the seat of government, where, without any responsibility, he would by epicurean and other artifices, divide, undermine, and finally subvert the rival administration. It is my sincere opinion, that as Vice President, Mr. Jefferson would at present be more dangerous than as President.

Under a conviction that the vote will be so equally divided between Mr. Adams, Mr. Pinckney and Mr. Jefferson as to be insusceptible of calculation, and with a certain knowledge that Mr. Jefferson will be preferred if the choice is made by the House of Representatives, it is my opinion that the eastern States ought to support Mr. Adams and Mr. Pinckney generally. If Mr. Pinckney should be elected, I cannot but hope that the peculiarity of our situation will justify the proceeding to Mr. Adams, and that he would consent to serve in the office of Vice President. This is a matter, however, upon which he alone must determine. Is is certainly a painful idea to think of exposing his election to any risque—his long services, his talents, integrity and patriotism demand the proofs of confidence which the present election offers; not to improve it will be an injury to our national character. Besides, it is disagreeable to think of elevating a person to the Chief Magistracy who has been recently hacknied and vulgarized as Mr. Pinckney must have been in Europe. It would be well if the public

opinion could be united in a person, the measure of whose abilities and whose opinions, foibles and peculiarities were little known. This is, however, impossible; we must take things as they are, and if any men distrust the permanency of our system, they more than others ought to be careful that the present experiment should be fairly tried, that at least the country may not suffer twice from the same errour.

As for Mr. Jefferson, the circumstance that he permits himself to be named as a candidate, is a sufficient proof of some defect of character which renders him unworthy of confidence. No virtuous and wise man would, in my opinion, expose his country to the dangers, and his character to the imputations, which must issue from an election under the unmasked interference of a foreign nation.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, Nov. 28, 1796.

Sir,

I have had the pleasure to receive your letters of the 19th and 21st instant, with an enclosure of the communication of M. Adet. I shall blush for my country if its publication can produce any effect but the deepest resentment; his conduct is as affronting to our understanding as it is to our rights as a nation. It will produce in Connecticut a result, very different from what was intended. If the impressions be yielded to by the southern states, and produce the alteration in the system of national administration, which the Directory wish, it will accelerate an event which our southern people above all others ought to dread. It is perfectly well understood, that their conduct for some years past has involved this country in almost every evil it has and does suffer; and if matters are brought to an extremity, they never will derive the least aid from the northern states, but a line of demarcation will, and ought to be made, and they left to the plenary enjoyment of French liberty. Such an event will be unhappy for us, but much less so than to be under the administration of a French agent. Mr. Jefferson must not be President of the United States; his foreign Machiavelian policy has already done his country great injury and dishonour. We ought to be independent, not in the name only but in reality, and I trust that one part of the country at least will, by the blessing of God be so, although they be exposed to the severest trials.

This state I apprehend will be firmly united in their election. I hope they will be so throughout New England. I doubt not but the majority of the people in Berkshire are federal. An effort to set up a man for representative, of at least a very dubious moral and religious character, has failed. By the papers I perceive Vermont has chosen Elisha Sheldon, a compound of folly and knavery, and one Gallup, who, it is said, is a vociferons anti-treaty tavern-keeper, electors. How they will act in the choice of President I have not been told. The event of the elections of the heterogeneous mass of the Pennsylvanians is very interesting; it seems their decision must have been made by a small majority. I trust that the federal interest will prevail, and if so, I sincerely wish that Mr. Adams may be President, and Mr. Pinckney Vice-President, but this villainous interference of the French renders all calculations precarious.

M. Adet's powers it is said are restored. I believe there can be no doubt but the immediate objects of the French are plunder, and the election of Mr. Jefferson; what other ultimate objects they may have can be only a matter of the most uncertain conjecture, and will as it respects us, probably depend upon events. If they make peace with Great Britain, perhaps it may be by her cession of Canada; the western waters have been an object of the French wish for half a century. By quarrelling with America they may hope to obtain them; they have predisposed the people of those countries to receive their government. Spain may possibly think they may be less dangerous to them than these states united, and may be disposed to adopt the dangerous experiment, but European calculations respecting America, I believe will be fallacious, for I think it not probable that their governments will operate in America, a third of a century. Yours, &c.,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

BROOKLINE, Nov. 30, 1796.

My Dear Sir,

I am glad to see M. Adet's manifesto, which you were so good as to send me. If the devil is in company it is always best to see his cloven foot. Although I am not sure that our country can escape all the evils which threaten it from without, yet I am persuaded that our chance will be best when we no longer indulge ourselves in the foolish belief of French friendship. The copy you sent me was the only one I heard of by the post, and consequently I cannot state to you the opinions of others, but my own is clear, that this measure will serve to strengthen our government.

No decisive judgment can yet be formed respecting the votes of our electors for a second man. They will doubtless give Mr. Adams every vote, and I think a large majority (perhaps all) for Mr. Pinckney. Upon this last point they will probably be governed by the best intelligence which can be had on the day of voting. If they could certainly make Mr. Adams President, and Mr. Pinckney Vice-President, or if it should be pretty evident that Mr. A. cannot be carried, and that Mr. P. may, I should not doubt they would give Mr. P. every vote. At any rate, you may rely that proper attention is given to the business.

Mrs. Cabot unites with me in every sentiment of friendship and affection towards all your family. Yours, sincerely,

G. CABOT.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## FOURTH CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION.

During the past summer some progress had been made in the execution of the Treaty with Great Britain, notwithstanding the late period at which Congress had taken the necessary initiative. The posts were surrendered upon the passage of the appropriation giving the treaty effect. Preparations had also been made on the part of the United States for carrying into effect the treaty with Spain; a final settlement with Algiers was in progress, and measures had been adopted for effecting treaties with Tripoli and Tunis.

Congress formed a quorum on the first day of the session. On this day a delegate from the newly added State of Tennessee appeared, was qualified and took his seat; one who, young and unknown as he then was, destiny had marked out as the future ruler of the nation, into whose grand council he now came as the first representative of its youngest member; and how many on that floor foresaw, in his gaunt frame and iron visage, a successor of him who was now to bid them farewell, the man who for good or for evil was to wield the future destinies of his country with the power of a Cæsar!

On the 7th the President's speech was delivered to Congress. After reviewing the progress of foreign negotiations during the past year, he proceeded to recommend the measures which, in his opinion, were necessary for

the national prosperity or defence. The increase of the navy; the establishment of an effective militia; the provision of public stores; the encouragement of manufactures and of agriculture; the foundation of a national university and a military academy; finally, additional provisions for the public debt were pointed out to the attention of the Legislature. He concluded as follows:

"The situation in which I now stand, for the last time, in the midst of the representatives of the people of the United States, naturally recals the period when the administration of the present form of government commenced; and I cannot omit the occasion to congratulate you and my country on the success of the experiment, nor to repeat my fervent supplications to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe and Sovereign Arbiter of nations, that his providential care may still be extended to the United States; that the virtue and happiness of the people may be preserved; and that the government which they have instituted for the protection of their liberties may be perpetual."

Solemn indeed was the scene as the warrior, the patriot, the statesman, venerable alike from his age and his character, thus before the delegates of the people pronounced this beautiful invocation. And as they now drank in the words of him who should no more thus address them; as they gazed on that reverend form, and heard his fervent prayer for the safety of his country, what eye was not dimmed; who did not join in the aspiration; who did not honor him whom that country had called FATHER! Yet those very Representatives, within a short week after, were gravely discussing a motion to amend the responsive address, by striking out all expressions of confidence and trust, and the envenomed attack came from a Virginian!

The issue of the election, so fiercely contested and so nearly balanced, now absorbed, as may well be suppos-

ed, all thoughts. The following letters will present a pretty faithful view of prevalent motives and opinions.

### URIAH TRACY TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, 6th Dec., 1796.

Sir,

You will doubtless hear from your family, who were in company with me, that we all arrived safely in this city on Sunday morning. Yesterday there were sixteen members of the Senate present; of course we could only adjourn till this day, when I presume we shall have a quorum and proceed to business. Probably we shall have the President's speech to-morrow. The House of Representatives made a house yesterday and went to business.

The election of President and Vice President engrosses the conversation of all parties. Gov. Mifflin of this State, has acted a most extraordinary part, by postponing his proclamation of elections in Pennsylvania; by which step it is probable all, or all but one or two, will vote for Mr. Jefferson. Yet I think Mr. Adams will be chosen, unless Mr. Pinckney has it. This letter will not reach you until after your votes in Connecticut are given. Of course nothing can be done in consequence of any suggestions I can make; otherwise I should suggest to you, with due deference to your better judgment, whether it would not be advisable to throw some votes away from Pinckney. With my present sentiments, Mr. Adams will certainly have more votes than Mr. Jefferson—if so, the chance of Mr. Jefferson's having such a plurality as to carry him in Vice President, is less to be feared than that of Mr. Pinckney being President. However, sir, I beg you to consider this as not being done with a view to dictate. I feel a confidence all will issue properly. I shall take the liberty to write you again upon any occurrence which I may think will permit your notice. In the mean time, I am, sir, with esteem, your excellency's humble servant,

URIAH TRACY.

N. B. Your particular connexions and relations here are well.

### TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

December 8th, 1796.

* * * The President will lay the correspondence with France, since Genet's time, before Congress. A letter is preparing by Col. Pickering to Mr. Pinckney, in answer to Adet. Tom. Paine has published a book against the President containing the most infamous calumnies. It is a systematical measure of France to destroy the public confidence in the friends of government or "Washington faction." The question, whether our commerce is or is not to be attacked, depends entirely on the military operations in Germany and Italy.

FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Litchfield, Dec. 12, 1796.

Sir,

* * * When I went to attend the election at Hartford, I supposed we should all vote for Mr. Adams and Pinckney. At the same time I felt a strong repugnance to prefer Mr. Pinckney to be Chief Magistrate, but such was the delirium of the times, that I suppose the chance must be submitted to. In conversing with the electors, a strong propensity was discovered, to secure, if possible, Mr. Adams' election as President. Mr. Ellsworth, with whom I conversed, was clear in the opinion, that that should be our main object. Information was called for, and all that could be obtained was had. The election was delayed till the evening, to wait the arrival of the mails; these brought no material information but what we before had, and which indeed was substantially the same as what you communicated in your last letter. Upon this information, we believed we might entertain a pretty well-grounded expectation, that Mr. Adams would obtain as many as seventy-three votes, or at least a majority, then it was considered whether it was prudent to lessen the number of votes for Mr. Pinckney to check the predilection and anti-federalism of South Carolina, and whether Massachusetts might not do it, (respecting which we had not the least information) and whether, if we abated our votes for Mr. Pinckney, Mr. Jefferson might not be elected, which was considered by all, the worst of evils. Upon this point, whether to give both Mr. Adams and Mr. Pinckney equal support, there was some difference of opinion. We stood upon very conjectural grounds, but upon such information as we had, and after a perplexing consideration, I was of opinion, and the majority of the electors adopted the same, that we ought to run very considerable risk, rather than not secure, if possible, the election of Mr. Adams, and that it would be expedient to lessen Mr. Pinckney's vote to the amount of four or five. In such an uncertainty of affairs no one could act with much satisfaction, and doing business of the last importance upon precarious principles is very perplexing. Upon the whole, I believe that we could do nothing better, and as I have heard nothing how the electors have proceeded in any other state, I am not, upon reflection, displeased with what we have done; though at the same time, I am sensible that it is an affair of the greatest uncertainty; but so it must be.

My strong wish that Mr. Adams might be elected President, independent of the merit of his services and his present situation, which ought not to be forgot, arises from his knowledge of all the public characters of his country; his experience, (of which a person long absent and not much conversant with characters, opinions and biases in the various parts of the Union, must be destitute) and [from the fact] that the particular acquaintances of Mr. Pinckney are people, whose political opinions we do not approve of; that his residence in Great Britain and being conversant with the ministers of foreign courts, must have let them into too minute an acquaintance with any foibles of his character, (and he is very fortunate if he has none) and an unguarded familiarity may have lessened his respectability for the exalted character of President of the United States;

that his acquaintance with the finesse and hypocrisy of foreign courts may have induced him to believe such conduct necessary, although President Washington has given the most glorious example to the contrary; that the election of Mr. Pinckney would be a partial triumph of the French and their traitorous American partizans; that Mr. Adams, it was fully believed, would never serve under him, and meet with all that French and American insult and reproach which he might expect; and that probably enough there may be in Mr. Pinckney, that facility and want of intuitive perception which might expose him to the successful assault of artifice and address. Under these and some other views which might be mentioned, as that after the retirement of a President, who has had the unlimited confidence of all the northern states, I know of no southern character who can secure more than a small part of that confidence in case of a war; and if the phrenzy of the southern states shall render a disunion, or an energetic support of it [of Union] necessary, in the one case we retire with more ease, in the other Mr. Pinckney will not be able to support it if requisite Besides, we shall not be satisfied to have a President appointed contrary to our wishes, by a negro representation only; this last circumstance is perhaps a vulgar prejudice, as the constitution fixed this matter, but still it is a mortifying one. Mr. Ellsworth is of opinion that Mr. Jefferson would not accept the office of Vice President. I wish his opinion may be well founded, if such an election shall be made; but as I consider him as an enlisted French partizan, and of unbounded self-confidence, I believe that he would accept.

I have hastily sketched the reasons which may have probably existed in the minds of the Connecticut electors, and can only wish that our proceedings may produce the salutary effects which were intended, and wait with anxiety to know the final result of this important business.

I am sensible that a person placed with a people who are united and determined, will be apt to think and speak more decidedly than another who is differently situated; yet I will say, that if French agency places Mr. Jefferson in the seat of the Chief Magistrate, (and if he is placed there it will be by their intrigues) that the government of the United States ought at that moment to discontinue its operations, and let those who have placed him there take him to themselves; for although I am sensible, by our last revolution, of the evils which attend one, I sincerely declare that I wish the northern states would separate from the southern the moment that event shall take effect, and never reunite with them except it shall be necessary for military operations. I trust that such pusillanimity will never exist in the northern states, as to submit in any degree to a foreign power, unless compelled to by the bayonet. The age of reason has not yet come; for I believe that at no period have mankind at large acted more contrary to its dictates than at present, and America will add a paragraph to the history of nations in the manner which has been recorded of others.

We have no clue to guide us to what will be the termination of the present war. I do not expect that peace will be settled between Great Britain and France, or that either government expects or desires it. The intolerable insolence and oppression of the French, have made all who know them their implacable foes. I find the peasants of the country, where their armies have been,

murder without pity a Frenchman whenever they find him. I think this universal exasperation, and the circumstances of their internal affairs, will probably produce a great reverse in their fortunes.

* * * *

I am, &c.,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, Dec. 13, 1796.

Sir,

I place under cover to Frederic, a paper of yesterday, in which you will find Gov. Mifflin in his address has done the government of Connecticut the honour of particular mention. It merits, and I presume will meet only with contempt. A few days after this display of patriotism and a holy zeal against speculation, the President and Cashier of the State Pennsylvania Bank had been guilty of an embezzlement of its monies or malversation. The President had by connivance taken from the bank one hundred thousand dollars and more, without consent of the directors, which, though charged, he kept without interest. He and the Cashier are both displaced. It was yesterday rumoured that Governor Mifflin, whose son-in-law was Cashier, had in the same way taken fifteen thousand dollars, and that he had given his security for restitution. I believe the story, but a few days will make it more certain, and in the meantime no mention need be made of it. This place furnishes indication of great depravity; bankruptcies are frequently happening. Mr. Morris is greatly embarrassed. 'Tis said that Nicholson has fled to England; that Judge Wilson has been to gaol and is out on bail; but there are so many rumours I vouch for the credit of neither. Blair McClenachan, lately chosen Representative, has conveyed his estate to his children to cheat his creditors.

We yesterday had the news of the destruction of two-thirds of Savannah—being burnt.

You will not give any credit to the statements of the votes for President, taken from the Aurora. Accounts are,

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pennsylvania, | Jefferson | 14 | Adams | 1 | Burr | 13 | Pinckney | 2 | P. Henry | | | |
| Delaware, | | | " | 3 | | | " | 3 | | | | |
| Maryland, | " | 4 | " | 7 | " | 3 | " | 4 | " | 2 | | |
| N. Jersey, | | | " | 7 | | | " | 7 | | | | |
| N. York, | | | | 12 | | | " | 12 | | | | |

According to calculations here, Mr. Adams will be President; the event is yet however, anxiously waited for. I have just received your letter, and close in haste by subscribing myself, your obedient, humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 15, 1796.

Sir,

Accounts of votes just received from Virginia, are Jefferson 20, John Adams 1, Samuel Adams 15, Washington 1, Pinckney 1, Burr 1, Clinton 3.

We are on the answer to the President's address. Giles leads in the opposition, but I think he can't carry the party the length he wishes. I am, respectfully, your obedient, humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 17, 1796.

Sir,

Before your letter of the 8th instant came to hand, I had anticipated the perplexities you mention, in fixing on the arrangement of votes for President and Vice President. I fully appreciate the correctness of the views which preponderated in the choice of difficulties, and now have the pleasure to enclose a paper containing a list of votes, which only awaits the return from Vermont to assure us of Mr. Adams being chosen President. As yet, it is not sufficiently complete clearly to ascertain the result as to Vice President. If Mr. Jefferson should be chosen, it is cause of some consolation that the votes are so cast in New England that it must be owing to support in South Carolina, or Mr. Pinckney's want of it. State or individual attachments, when compared with the interests of the country, are of inconsiderable consequence. There have been three sets of opinion; that Mr. Adams' election to be President was so important as to justify the supposed risk as to the federal characters; that it was wise to hazard or even sacrifice Mr. Pinckney's election as Vice President, if necessary, to secure Mr. Adams, but in the nice state the business was known to stand, the whole federal interest was put in too imminent risque by diminishing Mr. Pinckney six votes. That Mr. Pinckney as President, and Mr. Adams, Vice President, was better for the government than the latter being President, and Mr. Jefferson Vice President.

Each of these opinions has had respectable advocates among federalists, who, perhaps more than could be expected, have sincerely supported Mr. Adams' election. On doubtful ground, as this clashing of sentiments must convince every one, the matter was placed. When the electors meet, the friends of the government ought to acquiesce cordially in the arrangement that has taken place. In my opinion, they have evinced more sagacity than under so many perplexing embarrassments ever attended the deliberations of numerous and unconnected assemblies. A good Providence has been with them, to fix a determination in favour of Mr. Adams' Presidency. It has been rumoured that Mr. Jefferson will not accept the Vice Presidency; his Virginia partisans say he shall, and will; some suppose it is what he most covets. He can't do otherwise without disobliging his friends, and he has too long had a lurching for the Presidency to give up his hold on his party. We must expect him to be the nucleus of a faction, and if it will give him some greater advantages for mischief, it draws him more from his covert. We better know what he will wish to do, than what he will dare

or will have the power to attempt. And where there are so few data to make an estimate, it is not worth while to anticipate evils as certain or extensive. It will, if it happen, be a mortifying circumstance to the friends of the government, and a partial triumph to faction. It is desirable the two first magistrates should harmonize together, in my opinion, as long as the government has to conflict with rival parties, and which will be as long as it lasts, that will be but seldom the case. We need not distress ourselves greatly about it; the age of reason will settle the matter when it has brought man to the point of perfectibility—and in the rapidity of its strides, we may wait patiently.

Mr. Adams' age, long public life, important services, consequent weight, and the weight of that part of the country where he lives, and his present office, are obvious and invincible reasons for supporting his election, to the exclusion of any other candidate. He has never deserted his country, nor its true friends. His opposition to its insidious enemies, has exposed him to their calumny and intrigues ever since Mr. Jefferson's return from France. There is a tie of confidence and honor which binds men of this stamp together, that ought not to be violated, except in extremes. While hope lasts for their election, they should not be let down in favour of neutral characters. The precedent contaminates, through the grades of office; it is a wound of the severest kind—it is a wound in the cause of virtue, and from her friends.

By instituting the office of Vice President, the Constitution contemplates a succession; it means to provide a candidate on probation for the Presidency; it means to avoid the evils of hereditary succession, and the turbulence of the public mind being entirely left afloat. Unfortunately it has left the citadel exposed by the preposterous mode of election. The most important principle on this occasion, has been respected to regard the principle of succession primarily.

No doubt the conflict we have to maintain against French intrigue, had its influence with the electors. The unanimity east of this place shows serious apprehension among the people.

The confidence the people have in the Executive, more than any minute knowledge of the affairs of the whole branches, keeps the people steady. The Executive is the only single object at which they can or will look. The experiment would be hazardous to place the Executive in a character little known in New England, and without any preëminent features of public character, in any part of the Union. More than hundreds, on the score of merit, have a preferable claim to Mr. Pinckney. I do not mean to depreciate his worth. I value it. But he has had no intimate relation with the government. Whatever philosophy might say, Mr. Adams would feel himself, on the President's retirement, degraded in a subordinate station. He would go to the government of Massachusetts. In that I don't merely conjecture. His friends would not feel cordial to any other administration. State pride in Massachusetts, of which they have enough, would be chagrined. So far as I have information, there is no reason to suspect but what Mr. Adams has had a warm support of the federalists, in the southern States. If there is any cause of suspicion to the country, it is in respect to some federalists in this State. It is not always easy to discriminate betwixt their folly and their craft. They are caught in the snare if they have played legerdemain as to

Mr. Adams. Had the federal ticket prevailed here wholly, the southern faction would unanimously have voted for Pinckney.

Attempts were made by the *antis* to persuade Mr. Adams and his friends, that certain characters designed to make Mr. Pinckney, President. The insinuation was a vile and rascally fabrication. It was pointed at Col. Hamilton, who I am told, wrote to the eastern electors to vote unanimously for Pinckney. Since the votes of Connecticut came, I have heard nothing further about it. Mr. Adams has reason to consider, and I know does consider the arrangement of votes in Connecticut as a very honourable testimony of attachment. Pains will be taken to disseminate jealousy if Mr. Pinckney is unsuccessful; but all candid men must, when the first impulse of disappointment shall be over, do justice to the integrity of motive, and sensible ones, to the sagacity which has attended the business. The length of this detail claims an apology; it is to be found in a desire to communicate to you what has passed here on this subject. To dismiss it with only informing you we are not entirely without hopes Mr. Pinckney may find some support in Kentucky, and Jefferson less in South Carolina than has been calculated on. We have not any particular information on which to ground our hopes.

The answer to the President's speech has been a bitter pill to our democrats; they fear they have belied past conduct. Madison declines a future election. Adet's note has not done them the service they intended, and they are apprehensive the spirit of the country will not bear it. There is no real friendship among the leaders. Virginia has treated Burr scurvily in the election, and North Carolina not much better. Langdon is simple enough to say he might have known they would lurch him. Mr. Wolcott has given us a long report on direct taxes. As soon as it comes from the press, I will endeavour to find some conveyance for it.

We are all well, and join in affectionate remembrances of respect. I am, sir, your ob't humble serv't,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 22, 1796.

Sir,

In Claypoole's paper of this morning is a letter from Columbia, South Carolina, dated the day of election, informing that the electors had unanimously voted for Jefferson and Pinckney. I have had no opportunity to enquire into the authenticity of this account. There are contradictory accounts of the votes in New Hampshire. One that they are for Adams and Pinckney, the other that they were for Adams and Ellsworth. We want more decisive information. In an Albany paper, the votes in Vermont are said to be for Adams and Pinckney. This week will eclaircise the business.

The accounts of the election in the State of New York, so far as rumors can be trusted, don't forebode so favourable a change in the representation as we have been promised. Congress is yet on the routine of business. The weather is uncommonly cold. Our cities are infested with incendiaries. A second fire at Savannah has destroyed about twenty houses; both fires there are supposed

to be accidental. No European news. I am, sir, with respect, your ob't humble serv't.,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 23, 1796.

Sir,

I am much obliged by your early notice of my letters, which I have the pleasure to receive, from yours of the 10th instant. The papers I have sent you, with the one enclosed, will give you the proceedings of Congress, and the other occurrences.

We are assured the votes of New Hampshire are not for Mr. Pinckney as has been confidently given out, which renders Mr. Jefferson's election more than probable. This event is a new call on your patience, which I flatter myself will be attended with no other evil than present vexation of spirit. The unanimity of the country east of this State in favour of Mr. Adams' election, is at once singular and honourable, and if continued, will eventually prevail. The elections south of the Potomac don't denote any change of system. In all those States there is a respectable number of federalists; as yet they operate even without partial success.

It is already known that the House of Representatives will be better the next Congress; the extent of change is not ascertained. We fear from the imperfect accounts we have of the election in the State of New York, that caprice and supineness among the friends of government, have been favourable to a number of the present members, and that the representation in that State will not be amended. In this State there are six good members; in Maryland three more than in this last session; in South Carolina there is considerable change without any advantage, as is the case in North Carolina. The election in Virginia does not take place till March. We have no accounts from Georgia.

The conflagration of our towns is a mysterious business. No doubt seems to be entertained of their being infested with incendiaries; the received opinion is that gangs are associated for the object of plunder. I was told by Mr. Baldwin that he was convinced by accounts he had from Georgia, the fires in Savannah were accidental—from late accounts I observe that opinion is not universal.

The bank business here is hushed; there is enough of palpable disgrace for Pennsylvania to stagger under without dragging any from the vaults of the banks. The legislature could not help a formal enquiry, so far as to ask an account from the directors; nothing further is intended.

I hope the beginning of the week we shall have the treasury reports from the press. Accept Peter Porcupine's address on Adet's note, a part of which accompanies this, and the residue goes under cover to Frederic. I have nothing of family news to communicate, and only repeat the sentiments of respect with which I am, your obedient humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 6th, 1797.

Sir,

I have the pleasure of your favour of the 2d instant, which is made the more agreeable by the account of your health in this inclement season.

As I write in the midst of the spouting of the House, I can't give you the details of public affairs; to-morrow, leisure will afford me an opportunity for that respect. The report on the subject of direct taxes, is in my opinion one of the most useful public documents our government has produced. If the public opinion at present forms an objection to its full incorporation into our system of revenue, I believe more correct views will eventually prevail. It is too voluminous to go through the mail, but I hope some private conveyance will offer for this and other public documents.

You will see among the proceedings of Congress, a resolve laid upon the table for the appointment of a committee to examine the title of Connecticut to the Western Reserve. It is a spiteful measure of Mr. Livingston to retaliate, because Mr. Coit moved the question as to the payment of the balance due from debtor states. I presume the resolve will die where it is. Nobody need be disturbed about it. We are all in good health. Yours,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## URIAH TRACY TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 7th, 1797.

Sir,

Your letter of the last month is hereby acknowledged. Before you receive this you will probably know that all the votes for President and Vice President are returned. That Mr. John Adams has 71 votes, Mr. Thomas Jefferson 68, and Mr. Pinckney 59. Of course the two former fill the two first offices in our government for the next four years. Although I should be better satisfied not to have Mr. Jefferson in the government, yet I think it better that he should be Vice President than Mr. Pinckney President; especially as in that event we lost Mr. Adams, who would not have served as Vice President under any man but G. Washington.

Our French patriots are much cooler than when we first came together. The success of the Arch Duke and General Wurmser in Germany and Italy, has staggered their overweening faith. They begin now, since they find Mr. Adams will be President, to say he is a very good man, and will not be for funding systems and banking, and that he is too independent to be governed by Hamilton, &c. I really believe the Austrians have saved us from much difficulty, if not from a war. Had the French armies been victorious, the nation would have been so imperious, that war or something very troublesome and humiliating would have succeeded, considering the powerful party of Americans who would have more than kept pace with their French friends in haughtiness, had they not been checked by the Austrian successes. Information from the Hague, derived through indisputable and very creditable channels, which I am not now at liberty to disclose, is full, that the French Directory were governed entirely by advice of

Americans who were in Paris, and by information received there from Americans on this side of the water, in all their movements respecting America. On the 17th Sept., 1796, the President published his intention to decline further service after next March ; on the 9th of August, next preceding, measures were taken by the Directory of the Republic of France, to effect the election of Thomas Jefferson, and to bring over all our ministers abroad to unite their exertions with the French in that particular measure. This plan did not succeed to their wishes, upon which they concluded to attempt to give us a President by attacking our commerce and giving Adet, the French Minister here, discretionary orders to suspend his functions, &c., if he found it necessary, and to coöperate with the patriots of this country to effect their wishes, both as to a President and to cause a rupture between this country and Great Britain. Part of the general system against Great Britain, was to bring about a war between the Turks and the Emperor of Germany, draw in Sweden and Denmark to engage in a war with England, together with Spain, and to cause a rupture between Spain and Portugal, with the flattering idea for Spain to annex Portugal again to that kingdom. America was to guarantee the West Indies to France, and likewise fight Great Britain. In this way the aspiring leaders of the aspiring French were busied in schemes for employing the world in their favour, and again calling into review the old French vision of universal dominion, when the Arch Duke Charles, by a more brilliant military achievement than has been effected in the course of a century, cut up Jourdan's conquering army ; and Wurmser, by an an action little less brilliant, put the victorious Buonaparte at check at Mantua, the key of Italy and Germany. The French General, Moreau, has not yet crossed the Rhine, and the Austrians are in force on the left bank to intercept his crossing, and are in force on the right bank to interrupt his attempt. The Turkish government has now undergone a total change of officers, who have unanimously declared in favour of Austria, Sweden, and Denmark, have put the French at defiance ; Spain, if she has declared war on Great Britain will enrich the English, and Portugal laughs at them. America, I hope and trust will behave properly on this occasion throughout, as she has done in the choice of a first magistrate, and every other circumstance upon which it has been proper to act at all. Thus the intrigues, lies, and immense sums of secret service money, paid and promised by the French, have failed. The contemplative mind can hardly fail to recognize the hand of Him, who " rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm," and to acknowledge that he causes the wrath of man to praise Him, and graciously restrains the remainder.

By information from the Hague, through the same channels, we are assured that the Mynheers are heartily sick of being so violently forced to be free ; that the French Directory are now with much humility, coaxing the Belgians to make vigorous efforts with them against the common enemy, and in short, that their tone is taken down many degrees, upon finding their armies defeated abroad, and mutinying at home. The Germans are, as a people, totally enraged against the French, and in no danger of joining their regenerating principles against their own government ; and even the effeminate Italians are beginning to slay

their preservers (as the French call themselves). I hope at least, we in America, may be liberated from French hugs and guillotines.

I have trespassed much longer on your patience than I meant; please to accept the compliments of the season, and believe me, with much respect, your very humble servant,

URIAH TRACY.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 9, 1797.

Sir,

There have been only two subjects before the House of Representatives since the answer to the President's speech, which have occasioned much debate; a resolution for the relief of Savannah, and demand for payment by the debtor states; the first was rejected on the ground of opening the treasury to incalculable expense; the latter was stirred without previous concert, and when before us, a choice of difficulties only remained. By an adoption of the resolution we risqued a disturbance of federalism in New York and Delaware; by its rejection, discontent of the creditor states on the eve of increasing the revenue. If the State of New York shall possess the philosophy to treat the matter dispassionately, no ill will come of the measure, if the Senate should adopt it.

I am told by some of the members of the House, that the Secretary of State has nearly completed the communications in respect to our relations with France. In what attitude we can place our country as to that, is somewhat problematical. If a developement of foreign artifice shall enlighten our country, and cure it of extraneous attachments, the essential point will be gained; they will desist from their present vexatious conduct. Barney, who went from this country with Mr. Monroe, or soon afterwards, has come to Virginia with two ships as a commodore. The Jacobins at Baltimore have given him the honour of a military salute. He has undoubtedly instructions to capture American vessels. I am informed several gentlemen have seen his instructions. He is expected here. Ours, I believe, is the only country where such insults would be tolerated from a native citizen.

In the paper I send, is an account of a letter said to be received from Mr. Jefferson, expressive of esteem for Mr. Adams, and his satisfaction on his election. I can't vouch for the correctness of the publication. That he has wrote a letter of meek humility as to himself, and complimentary of the Vice-President, is asserted by several who have seen it. The democrats are besetting Mr. Adams with attention. Since his election has become ascertained, the scurrility in Bache's paper has ceased, and it is said the democrats are recommending to him conciliation of parties.

I suspect there is a plan on foot to change public opinion in Connecticut, and set the people in opposition to the government. If it be so, you will see the first symptoms of it lurking about New Haven and its vicinity, and progressing in the circuit of the court. There has not been any period, in my opinion, when an attempt of this kind could be undertaken with more promising hopes of suc-

cess. Private ambition will be powerfully succoured by the derangement of the affairs of individuals. It is also a period when there is a stress on the departments of public business, that requires patience and a conflict with popular prejudice to cure. I doubt not we shall get safely over all difficulties.

The weather is more inclement than known for many years. I hope to find some private conveyance for a packet of the pamphlets of the day. I am, sir, your obedient humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

The President, in his speech, had mentioned that some circumstances of an unwelcome nature had recently occurred in relation to France; that our trade had suffered, and was suffering extensive injuries in the West Indies, from the cruisers and agents of the French republic; and that communications had been received from its minister here, which indicated danger of a continued disturbance of our commerce by its authority. Further communications on these subjects were transmitted, in January, by a special message, inclosing copies of a letter from the Secretary of State to Mr. Pinckney, and other documents.

The complaints of M. Adet, contained in his final note, as well as the communications of his predecessors, embraced most of the transactions of our government in relation to France, from an early period of the war. The whole were reviewed in Col. Pickering's despatch; the justification of the government being supported by copies of the correspondence and documents relating to the affairs of the two countries. As a state paper, this production was admirable. Comprehensive in its details of facts, and forcible in its reasoning, it secured to its author a reputation for ability which, had he left no other evidence, could not be shaken. As an historical document, refuting the charges against Washington's administration, and the conduct of the federal party towards France, it is also one of great and paramount interest.

To enter at large into an examination of the complaints of the French minister, covering as they did every sub-

ject, from alleged grave violations of treaty, to the order in which foreign ministers were named in a Philadelphia directory, or to note the manner in which they were met, would require too much space; but it may be remarked that almost all the questions of actual importance had occured during the periods in which Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Randolph held the department of State, and Mr. Monroe that of Minister to France; that in regard to the principles of international law, the construction of the treaty of 1778, and the British treaty, the grounds maintained by the American government had been assumed and defended by them; that the difficulties already existed, and in a formidable aspect, when Col. Pickering came into the cabinet; and that with the exception of a few matters of inferior importance, no new ground of complaint on the part of France had since arisen. This circumstance has been carefully overlooked by anti-federal writers, and by no one more carefully than Mr. Jefferson himself, when it suited him to represent the conduct of the federal administration as partial, unfriendly and unjust. The archives of our government, however, will demonstrate that its principles of action, on these points, were all advocated or countenanced by these three chiefs of Virginian opposition. If in this they had deserved credit, as is not denied, the infamy of their double dealing was not thereby palliated but increased.

There was another class of complaints of a less tangible nature, which owed much of their gravity to the ornaments of rhetorical eloquence with which the fervid imagination of Adet had clothed them. Of this class was the alleged *ingratitude* with which we had returned the affection, the sympathy and assistance formerly shown by France to the United States. This charge, which formed a standing theme of French declamation, was caught up and stereotyped by the anti-federalists, as an evidence of the monarchism of their opponents, and the

prevalence of British influence in their councils. It might have been thought that the exhibition which the Directory had made of the motives which led the since fallen throne to assist the states in their struggles, would have cancelled the obligation; but in their view the debt still existed and survived to its destroyers, as the stolen garments of a malefactor, become the perquisite of his hangman.

M. Adet's note contained no reference to the complaints of the United States, and the Secretary's letter to Mr. Pinckney was simply a reply to those alleged on the part of France. The grievances which this country had suffered, were set forth in a report made during February, in obedience to a call of the House of Representatives. The history of the numerous decrees affecting neutral commerce, exposed a depth of hypocrisy and villainy unparalleled. It had been the practice of the Directory, on the remonstrance of our ministers, to repeal or suspend for a time some obnoxious order, as a proof of friendship to their "ally"; and when commerce had again extended itself, to renew it without notice, to sweep the ocean of its wealth—again to repeal, and again renew and capture. More than this, orders which had been revoked were re-enacted, and a retrospective effect given them, that seizures made in the interim might be covered. France had in this way carried on a system of maritime plunder which, equally infamous in character with the piracies of Algiers and Tripoli, was more gigantic in extent. The African tribes, whom modern civilization has hunted from the ocean, were pirates by trade. The laws which among civilized communities regulate their intercourse in peace, or their conduct when at war, were unknown to them. Outcasts from the family of nations, their hand was against every man, and every man's hand against them. France, on the contrary, in the course she had pursued, not only infringed a code, the obligations of which she admitted, but violated the faith of compacts entered into

with all the solemnities of which national engagements are susceptible. She was robbing friend as well as foe, neutral as well as belligerent, following out a stupendous system of national piracy. With a view to booty alone, had been framed the quick succession of orders, arrets and decrees, which were promulgated in reference to commerce, and from which American trade had suffered such enormous losses. The pretexts under which it was disguised, were too shallow to be long maintained in sober argument; she had therefore assumed the offensive in diplomacy as well as in force, and clamorously demanded satisfaction for supposititious injuries, while committing wholesale depredations herself.

An instance in proof of this assertion is furnished in the official correspondence of their agents at St. Domingo, who, writing to the minister of marine in January of this year, state, "that having found no resource in finance, and knowing the unfriendly dispositions of the Americans, and to avoid perishing in distress, they had armed for cruising; that already 87 cruisers were at sea, and that for three months preceding, the administration had subsisted, and individuals been enriched with the product of those prizes."[a] The colonial agents had in this but imitated their superiors at home.

The truth is that the thirst of universal conquest of the French nation, had swallowed up every consideration, every principle. Under the pretence of extending the blessings of liberty, she was subjugating in turn all the nations of Europe; professing to make war only against kings, she annihilated or absorbed every republic. Each conquest led to new wars—with every battle the prospect of peace receded. Thus, already her fields and her workshops were abandoned; already had commerce and credit perished. Drained of her own resources, she had recurred

[a] See Report of Secretary of State, January, 1799

to the barbarous custom of making war support war. Upon the land, the track of her armies was desolated; upon the ocean, the blazing wrecks of a thousand vessels indicated the course of her navies.

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Treasury matters as usual, occupied much of the session. On the 14th of December, Wolcott reported his plan for laying and collecting DIRECT TAXES. The subject, it will be remembered, had been discussed in the House of Representatives during the last session, the majority of the committee of ways and means having among other plans, reported in its favor. The opposition members had indistinctly advocated the raising the whole sum then required, in this manner the federal members had chiefly preferred indirect or internal taxes, as more productive and less unpopular. This latter character had, however, been with the opponents of the government no recommendation. Desirous of a change, they wished to force the administration into the adoption of a measure, which, most directly affecting every one, should most provoke dissatisfaction. They manifested at that time, no disposition to incur the odium of the imposition themselves, but in refusing their concurrence in other modes to an extent sufficient to defray the national wants, they calculated shrewdly enough on driving their adversaries into the adoption of the measure which they pointed out to them. The effort had then failed, but the extension of the indirect tax being impossible in the face of the opposition, the reference to the Secretary of the Treasury had been agreed to, that other means wanting, the public credit should at all events be sustained.

With respect to direct taxation, it is to be observed that Wolcott himself was in its favor, not as a temporary or a sole resource, but as a permanent system, coexistent with,

and auxiliary to the systems of revenue from imposts and from indirect taxation; as one not liable to the fluctuations of the former, and capable of being made productive, in connection with the latter, of a certain revenue when that from imports would be cut off by war.

As the resolution did not specify the amount of the proposed tax, the Secretary assumed that the sum to be apportioned should be sufficient to consummate the system established in March, 1795, and should be commensurate with the probable exigencies of the government. The resort to new loans for the purpose of paying instalments falling due, excepting in cases of urgent necessity, he reprobated as tending to perpetuate the debt, and as subject to constant difficulties. On this subject he said:

"The public faith having been pledged to reimburse a great portion of the debt which lately rested in permanent loans, sufficient revenues for this object, and all necessary expenses of government must be provided, or recourse had to a continued system of borrowing. If this last expedient should be resorted to, the public burdens—though the debts may change their form—will remain substantially the same. The government will moreover be liable to certain risks and expenses which inevitably attend extensive contracts; and unless it shall be found practicable to obtain new loans on terms at least as favorable as those to be extinguished, the public debts will be somewhat increased by the inefficiency of the measures which were intended to reduce them.

"It will not escape the attention of the House, that the causes which at present most favour the prosperity of the United States, and consequently increase the ability of the people to pay taxes, are such as oppose obstacles to the negociation of new loans, or at least render their terms peculiarly burdensome and expensive; but while it would be improper to encourage an expectation that the affairs of this extensive and enterprising country can be successfully conducted without an occasional application to this resource, it ought to be a fixed principle to establish a permanent revenue, adequate to every permanent expense, and sufficient to discharge in a reasonable time, all loans arising from extraordinary and unforeseen contingencies. This principle has been already recognized by the act of March 3d, 1795, which has solemnly pledged the public faith for the reimbursement of the debt now existing; it therefore only remains to embrace the present period as the most auspicious which has yet occurred, and as favourable as any which may be expected, for establishing and maturing such systems as will efficaciously fulfil the intentions of the legislature."

In pursuance of these views, and in order to arrive at

a correct estimate of the amount required for this purpose, a concise statement of the finances was presented[a]. Assuming that some systematic plan would be adopted for satisfying the existing contracts by direct payments from the treasury, instead of by new loans, the report proceeded to estimate the sums, which, dividing the time into four periods corresponding with those contracts, would be annually required during each of them to defray the expenses of government, and provide for the final extinction of the debt in the year 1824. This annual amount during the first period ending with the year 1800, was stated at $7,429,398 99, of which $2,700,000 was allowed as the probable expenses of the government, an estimate liable, however, to be increased by the gradual increase of the nation, and by future contingencies. The revenues already established amounted to $6,200,600, and to meet the balance of annual demands, the further sum of $1,228,794 50 was therefore to be provided for the first named period. To provide this, and allowing a defalcation of fifteen per cent. for expenses of collection and contingencies, it was proposed that there be laid upon the United States, a direct tax of $1,484,000.

Three modes of imposing the proposed tax had been suggested; they were stated as follows:

"1st. That an act of Congress should be passed, declaring the quotas of the different States, assigning a time for payment into the treasury, and prescribing in cases of delinquency, that the said quotas should be assessed and collected by authority of the United States upon the same objects of taxation, and pursuant to the same rules by which the last taxes were assessed and collected by the respective States.

2d. That the act of Congress should direct that the proposed tax should be assessed and collected under au-

[a] The estimate of the debt was of that which existed on the 1st of July preceding. This it is not considered necessary to repeat here.

thority of the United States upon the same objects of taxation, and pursuant to the rules of collection by which taxes are collected in the States respectively.

3d. That the act of Congress should define certain objects of taxation and principles of assessment, according to which the proposed tax should be assessed in all the States, to be collected pursuant to uniform regulations."

The first of these three modes the Secretary considered as subject to all the objections of the old system of requisitions on the States, to remedy which, was one great motive for the change of government. The second also presented some weighty objections. The system of taxation in the States were in many instances utterly different from each other in respect to objects of taxation and the principle of apportionment and collection. The arguments from these facts against the plan were stated at large. The third mode was the one preferred.

The report finally, after entering into a consideration of the various objects to which a direct tax was applicable, and the advantages and objections to each, recommended that it be confined to the following, viz :

1st. Lands, which it was proposed should be taxed *ad valorem*, but under limitations to be prescribed by law in respect to the estimated value of uninclosed and unimproved lands, in districts to be defined.

2d. Houses *exceeding in value those most generally occupied by farmers and laborers*, which were proposed to be distributed in each of the States into three classes, with reference to their value; to be taxed uniformly in each class at specific rates to be proscribed by law.

3d. Houses in general, and of such descriptions as should be determined by law, to be taxed at one uniform rate.

This report, which, with the accompanying documents extends to fifty pages folio, presented a complete exhibition of the subject. Besides a statement of the existing condition of the national finances, it embraced a view of

the system of direct taxation as adopted and in use in each State; of the principles which should be observed in creating a national system; its influence upon the several objects to which it was applicable, and its relation to other modes. The various plans suggested or in use, were reviewed at length.

No purchases of debt had been made by the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund during this year; but the sum of $544,066 54 had been applied, under the act of March 3d, 1795, as the first year's reimbursement of the six per cent. stock. The board had also caused 2,160 shares of the bank stock to be sold during the months of August and September, under authority of the act of the last session, at an advance of twenty-five per cent. The proceeds, amounting to $1,080,000, together with the sum of $120,000 obtained upon an issue of six per cent. stock, authorized by the same act, had been applied to the payment of a corresponding amount of the domestic loans.

A report in obedience to a resolution of June preceding, was at the end of December made by the Secretary, on the subject of the Public Debt, intended to exhibit its comparative amount at different periods. The dates assumed were the first of January 1790, 1791 and 1796 respectively. It stated in brief that the foreign and domestic debts of the United States, including the assumed debt and the balances due to creditor States *as adjusted and funded*, exclusive of the specie debts of the late government, paid at the treasury, under the present government, amounted on the 1st of January, 1790, to $75,414,427 97. That the same debts amounted on the 1st of January, 1791, by the accruing of interest during that year, to $77,361,428 70, and if the debts incurred by the late, and paid by the present government in specie, instead of being funded, were included, to the sum of $77,833,730 04. That the funded and unfunded debt of the United States, *including* the

sums purchased, redeemed and vested in the sinking fund, the instalment of six per cent. stock reimbursed on the last day of December, 1795, and all domestic loans, amounted on the 1st of January, 1796, to $85,065,423 22. That the debts purchased, redeemed and reimbursed by the new government, the shares of bank stock owned by it, and the revenue bonds remaining uncollected on that day, amounted, however, to $9,254,235 43.

The items which constituted the gross amounts at the last two periods, are here stated in a condensed form for the purpose of showing the transformations through which the debt assumed its present shape.

Statement of Foreign and Domestic Debt, of the United States, including the assumed debt, on the 1st January, 1791.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| FOREIGN DEBT, viz: | | |
| Debt due to France and interest, - | $8,190,531 58 | |
| Debt due in Holland, - - - | 3,863,000 00 | |
| Debt due in Spain, - - - | 250,582 50 | |
| Foreign Officer's debt, - - - | 209,426 08 | |
| Amount of foreign debt contracted by the late government and due 1st January, 1791, | | 12,513,540,16 |
| DOMESTIC DEBT, viz: | | |
| Principal, deducting amount paid into the treasury in certificates for sales by the late government and cancelled, - - - | $27,197,489 00 | |
| Interest, deducting payments, - - | 13,030,168 20 | |
| Unliquidated claims, - - - | 2,127,513 89 | |
| ASSUMED DEBT, viz: | | |
| Principal, - - - - | 12,181,254 07 | |
| Interest, - - - - | 6,090,560 67 | |
| Balances of creditor states, - - - | 4,221,101 00 | |
| Amount of Domestic Debt, including the assumed debt, on the 1st January, 1791, - | | 64,848,086 83 |
| Total amount foreign and domestic debt, - | | $77,361,626 99 |

Statement of the Foreign and Domestic debt of the United States, including the assumed debt, January 1st, 1796.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| FOREIGN DEBT, viz: | | |
| Loans effected by the late government at Amsterdam, still unpaid, | $2,539,000 00 | |
| Loans effected by the present government at Amsterdam and Antwerp, | 9,400,000 00 | |
| Amount of foreign debts, Jan. 1, 1796, | | $11,939,000 00 |
| DOMESTIC DEBT, viz: | | |
| Six per cent. stock, nominal amt., | 21,204,321 02 | |
| Deferred six per cent., " " | 10,508,666 77 | |
| Three per cent., " " | 13,492,995 47 | |
| | | 45,205,983 26 |
| Five and a half per cent. stock, | 1,898,900 00 | |
| Four and a half per cent., " | 176,000 00 | |
| | | 2,074,900 00 |
| ASSUMED DEBT, viz: | | |
| Six per cent. stock, nominal amt. | 8,120,836 23 | |
| Deferred six per cent., " " | 4,060,417 84 | |
| Three per cent., " " | 6,090,560 67 | |
| | | 18,271,814 74 |
| REGISTERED DEBT, | | 235,811 90 |
| Unsubscribed Certificates, | | 242,316 10 |
| Unregistered debt, estimate, | | 1,105,424 60 |
| DOMESTIC LOANS, unpaid, | | 6,200,000 00 |
| Foreign Officers' debt, | | 75,984 52 |
| Total debt, Jan 1, 1796, | | $85,351,235 12 |

The sums which were considered as offsets to so much of the debt, were:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Stocks included in the above amounts, but redeemed and vested in the sinking fund, | 2,710,168 89 | |
| Instalment of six per cent. stock, reimbursed December 31, 1795, | 544,066 55 | |
| Bank stock held by the United States on that day at par value, | 2,000,000 00 | |
| Bonds for duties accrued but still uncollected, | 4,000,000 00 | |
| Total amount, | | $9,254,235 43 |

The principles upon which this and other comparative statements were founded, furnished materials for a notable and long continued controversy between the two parties. It was contended by the federalists on the one hand, that the debt as it was finally settled and funded, was the real debt devolved upon the new government by its predecessor; and that therefore in computing the increase or diminution of the debt, the 1st day of January, 1791, when the system went into operation, must be taken as the starting point. On the other side the opposition denied that all the debts funded by the present had been contracted by the former government; they insisted that the assumed debt was not properly a debt of the United States, that even admitting the propriety of assumption, it could have been effected with a less amount, and that the difference was chargeable to the new government as an increase of debt; and they maintained that the interest which accrued on the debt after it went into operation, or, at any rate, after the 1st January, 1790, and which had been funded instead of being paid, was to be considered as an increase of debt by the latter. To this it was replied by the supporters of the system, that the assumed debt was contracted by the states for an object common to all, and was properly a charge upon the Union; that therefore in assuming the payment in place of the states, they had contracted no obligation which did not, in fact, previously exist. As to the argument that the same relative situation of the states might have been produced by funding the aggregate differences instead of the aggregate amounts, this was not the question, as the assumption had been effected with other views than the settlement of balances. In respect to the interest which accrued between the adoption of the constitution and the taking effect of the funding bill, they held it to be properly chargeable to the old government, for the very substantial reason, that the latter had left nothing to pay it

with, neither money in the treasury nor accruing revenue; and they insisted that the time to which it had been funded, was the earliest at which suitable provision could be made.

The objections of the anti-federalists to the method of statement pursued at the treasury, will be found argued with great subtlety, by Mr. Gallatin.[a] Two statements of the debt of the old government were presented by him, both on the basis of January 1st, 1790. The first was made on the admission, that the state debts assumed by the union, including therein the balances funded in favor of the creditor states, were actually debts due by the United States. This statement differed in result from the treasury statement of the same day, Mr. Gallatin estimating the total amount of debt on the 1st January, 1790, at $72,775,893 92. The second was made on the principle that the state debts were not properly debts of the union, and that only such an amount of the same had been assumed, (after the settlement of the accounts between the several states and the union) as would have placed the accounts of the United States with the individual states in the same relative situation on which they then stood, by leaving outstanding the same aggregate amount of the balances due, either to or from the several states, as then remained outstanding. By this method, the "true amount of debts on the 1st January, 1790," appeared to be $64,260,294 33. The whole amount of the principal of the public debt on the 1st January, 1796, deducting the amounts of stock purchased and redeemed, was $81,811,368 27, and deducting the bank stock and cash on hand on that day, was $78,697,410 12. Deducting from the amount first stated the balance of cash on hand, Jan. 1, 1790, the "increase of debt from 1790 to 1796,"

[a] "A Sketch of the Finances of the United States, by Albert Gallatin," 8vo. New York, 1796. Section III.

was, according to him, $6,084,155 49, and making the same deduction from the second statement, the increase was $14,437,115 79.

To explain the "principles" on which the original amount of debt was thus figured down, would require an investigation of the whole system upon which the debt was funded, and an extended defence of the assumption of the state debts and balances. This forms no part of the present design. It is sufficient for the purpose of this work to assume the state of facts as settled under Mr. Hamilton's plan, and to follow down the subsequent management of the treasury according to the existing condition of things. Fairness, however, and the due understanding of the views of parties, has required this explanation of the doctrines of the opposition. The subject will be again necessarily recurred to in a subsequent chapter. Meantime, one observation requires to be made upon the alleged amount of increase of debt, viz: that even in Mr. Gallatin's view it was not pretended that the whole of this sum had been *expended*, or otherwise contracted, than as assumed beyond the amount which properly should have been done. The increase of $6,084,155 under the first statement, was reducible to these two heads: 1st, from the excess of expenditures over receipts, and 2d, from such parts of the interest accrued on the debt since the 1st of January, 1790, as had been funded instead of being paid.

The excess of expenditures beyond the revenues received, which was in his view of the receipts and expenditures stated at $3,228,961 19, was, according to his own admission, subjected to deductions as follows:

First, the excess of nominal amount of stock purchased by the commissioners of the sinking fund beyond the monies applied to purchases, $688,725 67. Secondly, gain by the conversion of premiums on the old Dutch debt into an annual charge, $66,775 58. Thirdly, monies

actually collected, but not passed into the treasury accounts, estimated by him at $600,000 00. Which sums, amounting altogether to $1,355,501 25, made the real amount of excess of expenditure beyond revenue only $1,873,459 94.

The other items, were interest upon the proper domestic debt, the assumed debt, and the state balances, amounting together to $4,210,695 55, which were funded instead of being paid; so that after all, the great part of the increase said to have taken place was to be referred into a mere question of opinion as to the correctness of the principles on which the debt was funded. To go back to Wolcott's statement, the difference between the amount of debt as represented by him to have existed on the 1st January, 1790, and that stated by Mr. Gallatin, lay in the allowance or disallowance of this last amount as being a debt on that day. The difference between their results in the comparison of debt of 1790 and of 1796, sprung from this, that Wolcott had set off against the gross amount of debt, the amount of uncollected bonds. Mr. Gallatin, on the other hand, admitted only the supposed cash in hand as an offset.[a]

This matter of bonds requires a moment's notice in passing. The treasury, it has already been mentioned, were in the outset obliged to anticipate the revenues of the year by temporary loans. But a small sum had been left on hand by the old department, and no revenues at first existed. Credits were necessarily given to importers for the duties imposed under acts of Congress, and temporary loans were obtained of the bank of the United States in advance of the actual payment of their bonds, payable on the coming in of the revenue. The usual anticipations were annual, and had been annually repaid;

[a] It is not to be understood that Mr. Gallatin's statements had reference to this individual account. His work was published in November preceding the report. It is, however, applicable to this as well as to other statements made on the same basis.

but the stock loan and the extraordinary loans, already mentioned, were payable in instalments. It had been usual to consider the bank stock, cash in the treasury, and bonds for duties accrued but not collected, as counterbalancing this temporary debt. But the opposition, who were too much interested in making out the charge of increase of the public liabilities to let slip an occasion, strenuously contested the correctness of the postulate. The applicability of the bank stock and cash on hand they could not very well dispute, but the custom-house bonds they most strenuously denied as admissible among the assets acquired by government. The arguments on either side will be found embodied in the report of the committee of ways and means of May 8th, 1800, and the pamphlet published by Mr. Gallatin in reply.

The subjects of these bonds, and the propriety of considering the funded interest as part of the old legacy of obligation, run through the whole history of discussion on the finances. The actual obligations of the country could neither be understated nor overstated, and the question of how much the debts had been increased or diminished rested entirely upon argumentation on these and similar points.

The committee of ways and means on the 3d of January reported resolutions in favor of a direct tax on land and slaves, but the session passed away without final action. Other sources of additional revenue were sought, and in reply to the inquiries of the committee, Wolcott suggested salt, brown sugar, teas, and cotton manufactures not printed, stamped, or colored, as the most proper. As to a general increase of duties he remarked:

"With respect to a general augmentation of the duties on imports, I consider it to be my duty to observe that the average rate already imposed, exceeds sixteen per cent. ad valorem; that the last advance of the duties was made at a time when the commerce of the United States was far from being in a natural state; that the temptations to illicit trade will increase in proportion to any re-

duction of the general rate of mercantile profit; and that a considerable reduction of this general rate is to be expected whenever the present war in Europe shall terminate. On these grounds, I conclude that present experience affords us certain data for an opinion respecting the permanent operation of the existing duties."

The committee agreed upon these articles except *salt*, and an act passed accordingly, the duties being appropriated, first to the payment of the foreign debt and afterwards to that to the bank. This was the only revenue bill passed during the session. An ineffectual attempt was made to obtain from the states, found indebted to the United States on a settlement of the accounts, the payment of their balances. The committee of ways and means reported that application be forthwith made to the states for that purpose; the balances to be receivable in the same proportions of six per cent., deferred, and three per cent. stocks, in which those due to the creditor states had been paid. These balances were due from New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, and amounted to about four and a half millions, over one-half being due from the State of New York. An act in pursuance of the recommendation could not, however, be procured. The amounts due from these states, being in all about $4,500,000, which would, if paid, have been a reduction of so much of the debt, and were a rightful offset to the same amount of stock issued for the balances to the others, were never collected.

The course of the Barbary negotiations had rendered necessary a further appropriation. Owing to accidental detention, the money provided for the execution of the treaty did not arrive at Algiers at the stipulated time. The impatience of the Dey at this circumstance was increased to violence by another occurrence. This was the publication of the papers relative to the original negotiations which had been communicated in confidence to the Senate. A copy of these having been sent him through

some secret channel, he threatened to break off the treaty altogether, when Mr. Barlow, who had been sent by Mr. Monroe and Col. Humphreys to join Mr. Donaldson, promised a frigate in addition to the stipulated sum. The sudden fall of the stock remitted for payment, together with this new demand, required a further appropriation of $250,000, which was made.

Reports were made by the Secretaries of State and of the Treasury to the President, relative to the situation of affairs with the Dey and Regency, which were transmitted to the Senate in a confidential message from the President, on the 19th of January. These reports detailed all the circumstances of this unhappy negotiation in a manner perfectly satisfactory, so far as the government was concerned. The fact of the expense and the loss was, however, enough for the purpose of the anti-federalists, and the secrecy of the message was violated by some senator through the medium of Mr. Livingston, to render the transaction more odious. The disclosure was the more disgraceful, as the vote had been so nearly unanimous, twenty-four senators voting for the ratification to three against. It is almost needless to say, that Mr. Mason of Virginia, was one of the latter.

So much was said at the time and afterwards, about the payment of this tribute, that it is worth while to see who were the tributaries.

The following is an extract from a paper by Wolcott, written during Jefferson's administration.

"The facts relating to this subject are, that the granting of subsidies to the Barbary powers as a condition of their remaining at peace, was not a measure of Washington. It was his opinion that a naval force ought to be found to defend our rights. He believed that in our then defenceless situation, a peace purchased with money would increase the cupidity of the piratical states, and expose great numbers of our countrymen to capture and consequent slavery, or entail on our country the necessity of incurring a heavy and disgraceful expense. Congress would not consent to build ships, and for six years after the present government was formed, a number of our citizens remained in captivity. The

people of our commercial cities, influenced by a generous sensibility for their countrymen in bondage, were about forming a subscription to redeem them at private expense. The payment of tribute, if such it must be called, became *popular*, the objections of Congress to the expense vanished of course, and a large sum for the 'purchase of peace' was appropriated by law. This was no party work; the grant was made with the approbation of all parties, and especially with the approbation of Mr. Madison.

* * * *

"But if the frigate must be mentioned, would it not have been candid to mention that the frigate was promised *after peace had been concluded*, and by an agent designated by Mr. Monroe, without the knowledge of the government, and that this agent had no authority to make this promise? Have none of the present [Jefferson's] administration 'clear perceptions,' that they opposed an appropriation of money for this frigate, until they discovered that the engagement had been made by a popular character of their own party? Have they forgotten that they required from the executive administration a disclosure of the most confidential papers, relating to the Barbary negotiations; that they were furnished under an injunction of secrecy; that the injunction of secrecy was dissolved; that papers of the most important nature were published in the newspapers, by one of their friends, and by some unknown channel perfidiously conveyed to the Dey of Algiers? Are they apprized of the existence of official evidence, that this conduct furnished pretexts for extorting from the United States an additional sum, not much less than 200,000 dollars? Were not these transactions all justified on the grounds, that 'free governments ought to have no secrets?'"

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 18, 1797.

Sir,

I send you an evening paper. If the account of the French depredations under the Norfolk head be true, (and it is believed) it is further evidence of their system of plunder. We expect the President's communication about our relations with that power this week. As the principal design is to justify the conduct of our government, I presume the communication will be for public information. Our country must get over its love sickness for France, and if one degree of insult and suffering won't answer that valuable purpose, they will have madness enough to administer a sufficiency.

The subject of direct taxes has been several days before the House; what course it will take can't be conjectured. We must come to additional substantial revenue before long; I believe to direct taxes. As yet I can't say public opinion will bear the measure this session. I don't find any conveyance to forward the Secretary's report.

The session does not present any object so universally interesting as the last, but on the whole it is more perplexing. The government must come to a number of principles by which to steer its course. If the war continues in Europe,

we shall yet find difficulty to steer the ship. Is the ambition of the country to be kept up in all its enterprizes at home and abroad? If so we must have money. It is idle to murmur at the government because it does not protect commerce, and not give the Executive the means. We must leave the navigator to himself, and not extend our point of honour beyond our soil, or else begin arrangements to protect commerce. If we mean to pay our debt we must finally come to the mass of property; whiskey and carriages won't do it. We must arm the Executive with powers to curb the lawless efforts of our citizens to embroil us abroad, and repel all insults on the government. These things can't be done with this House of Representatives. I hope the next will be federal. We are in good health. I am, sir, your obedient humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## JAMES HILLHOUSE TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 23d, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I have not troubled you with any letter since the meeting of Congress, as nothing important has occurred which could claim your particular attention, until the receipt of the special message of the President of the United States, promised in his speech at the opening of the session, containing a more particular communication in relation to France. In this communication are detailed facts which were very important to be known, to manifest the solicitude and scrupulous exactness with which the government of the United States have, at all times, observed their treaties with France, and discharged every engagement and obligation they were under to that nation. And as the United States have suffered so much insult and injury from the French, and have been so often charged with the base crime of ingratitude, the Executive must, I think, stand justified to that nation and all the world, in going into a full development of the subject, to evince that the present ruling powers in France are actuated by the same motives, and guided by the same views as those which influenced the old government; and that the plan always has been to make this country subservient to the interests and projects of France; and whenever the interests of the two countries came in competition, to sacrifice that of the United States, even at the expense of, and in direct opposition to, their treaties with us. I have enclosed you the communication as far as it is published, which contains the substance of the whole; the residue being only documents to substantiate the facts here stated. This disclosure will, I hope, silence all further complaints from France, of our not having executed our treaties with them, and fulfilled every obligation we ever were under to them; and convince them that it is the fixed determination of our government to observe an impartial neutrality, and not to suffer our councils to be guided or influenced by any foreign nation whatever. I do not apprehend any further danger of France declaring war against us; we have certainly given them no just cause. Though I should deprecate such a calamity as much as any one, yet if we have but the alternative of war, or submitting to have our councils under the influence and guidance of a foreign nation, I should not hesitate a single

moment to prefer the former. Our independence is what we ought to guard with the most watchful jealousy, and spurn every attempt to introduce foreign influence—an evil to which free governments are vastly more liable than any other. Our losses and sufferings have been great, but I flatter myself that some good will spring out of the much evil we have experienced; and that by being buffeted by all nations, we shall be weaned from all foreign attachments, learn that we are Americans, and be taught that self-restraint which alone can make us respected by other nations.

With sentiments of the highest respect and regard, I am, dear sir, your excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

JAMES HILLHOUSE.

## URIAH TRACY TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, 24th Jan., 1797.

I wrote you some days since of the aspect of our public affairs. We get nothing new; a continuation of spoliations on our trade, especially in the West Indies, is what was expected. We have had some intimations that the Spaniards were taking our vessels. The Spanish minister denies this; but it is not very important, as the French are able to molest us so materially without Spanish assistance.

The House of Representatives are very seriously at work on the Secretary's report on direct taxation. What will be done I cannot divine; but unless driven by more serious depredations on our trade, I believe no tax will be laid this session. We have about 770,000 tons of shipping subject to tonnage; of this, about 200,000 tons is improved coastwise, and in fishing; of the remaining 570,000 tons, about 70,000 tons belong to foreigners; the remainder, about half a million of tons, belongs to Americans, and is in foreign trade. Tonnage and impost form the principal part of our revenue; and yet, sir, not a ship of force, not even a gun boat, is in preparation to protect this immense floating, defenceless property. The country, with the prodigious duty levied on trade, is not able to fulfil its contracts. What must be the result of this view of the subject? Will it not be this, that some mode of raising a revenue, either by direct or indirect taxation, which depends not on the sport of winds and waves, and what is worse, the fraternal hugs of our friends the French, must be resorted to?

The British nation, with their unparalleled commerce and fleet to protect it, have not usually raised more than one-fourth part of their revenue by impost, and not ordinarily more than a fifth part of it. In 1788 their revenue netted them something more than £15,000,000 sterling; of this their customs, as stated by St. Johns St. Clair, amount to £3,780,000, or thereabouts. If the United States can, under the present discouragements to their defenceless commerce, expect to succeed in their fiscal arrangements, by the assistance of impost only, I think the result is certain disappointment, and consequent confusion. Direct and indirect internal taxes must be resorted to. I acknowledge the idea of direct taxes, by apportionment, has never worn a pleasant appearance to me, but on the

contrary, a very unpleasant one; but of evils we must choose the least, and of exceptionable measures adopt the most unexceptionable. It seldom occurs, in political warfare, that the politician can be perfectly gratified. A choice of evils is almost the only alternative which presents itself in many of the most trying emergencies. I do not hesitate to say, that it is incumbent on the government, before a separation, to organize as far as may be, a direct tax, and likewise to lay as much internal indirect taxation, as will possibly go down. I am convinced that, by excises of various kinds, a million and a half or two million of dollars of revenue might be raised. I do not think the import will bear much raising, even if commerce were unmolested. An excise on salt even to a half dollar per bushel, would be an equal and very productive tax, &c. &c.

But our friends in Congress who have uniformly opposed the government, are determined that no tax shall be laid but a direct one, and I believe equally determined that a direct tax never shall be collected. They now intend, sir, to alarm with fear of a direct tax, but to be sure and never collect it, and to prevent any more excises from being either collected or laid; and they encourage French depredations to cut up our import. This prospect of our affairs affords them the satanic hope, that they can enjoy the fulfilment of their prophecies concerning the administration; and by introducing their beloved confusion, enjoy the measure of liberty for which the French partisans have long been planting. God grant they may be disappointed; but unless our people from the northward consent to every tax, direct as well as others, they intend to throw the blame on us, by claiming that all would have been well, had we not defeated a direct tax.

You may call me a croaker, but I really feel the present as a most eventful period. Our President whose factitious support to this government was almost infinite, withdraws, and a divided, I will not say disturbed people, are to have reason sufficient to allay their passions and undergo severe self-denial, for what? to support a government which more than half of them hate; for truly they hate it in all its possible shapes. However, sir, I am not one who despairs of the commonwealth; I have sworn to support the Constitution; my inclination induces me to attempt its support by every fair and proper measure, and I hope for the best possible events.

It is impossible to form much conjecture concerning a peace in Europe. I am rather of opinion that Lord Malmesbury does not effect a general pacification, and a partial one is certainly not within his orders. Mr. Adams (who is still at the Hague) has lately written home that the Belgians are paying somewhat dearly for their liberty. The provinces of Holland have taxed every citizen within a year on the incomes and profits of their estates, till they found the revenue incompetent, and they have laid a tax on the whole of each man's property to the amount of twelve per cent. This must of course absorb more than all the profits made, and trench considerably on each man's capital. To support a government at such expense, one would suppose the government must be a very good one, at least it must be a strong one if it can exist long.

We have at length effected a treaty with the Creeks which is a good one, and if the Georgians and Tennesseites can be kept in order, we shall have peace on that frontier. I am convinced that you will be fatigued with this long letter.

Your family here are well. I am, sir, with great respect, your very humble servant,

URIAH TRACY.

N. B. I enclose you a paper containing a defence of our government against Adet's notes.

## JAMES DAVENPORT TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, Jan. 24th, 1797.

I was honoured with your Excellency's letter of the 9th instant, four days ago, but as nothing of any importance has taken place since, I concluded to defer answering it until the communication, promised by the President on his speech at the opening of the session of Congress, (which was daily expected) should be made. It is now received, and I enclose you the part of it which has been printed ; the whole was very voluminous, but the part not printed contains only the vouchers to support the facts in the letter. The communication will, I hope, have the effect of relieving us from that debt of gratitude the French Ministers and our Jacobins have endeavoured to fix upon us, and which would only be discharged by yielding up our independence.

The public mind appears to me to be preparing for a change, and I am inclined to believe the time is not far distant when the conduct of that nation will universally be viewed with detestation. Such an event will be of the utmost consequence, as its tendency will be to excite in us national feelings and attachments, without which the American name never will be respectable. It will also arrest the depravation of morals which has so universally taken place among those who have attached themselves to the interests of this (the French) people.

The distresses, occasioned by the depredations on our trade, and the interferences in our internal concerns to which we have been obliged to submit, may be attributed in a degree to our own countrymen. It is an unfortunate fact that all our public persons employed in France, have been open enemies to the administration of our government, and have, instead of exerting themselves to ward off evils, assisted to produce those we are now suffering. The letter of Thomas Paine to the President, was written while Paine was living with Monroe, and was read in his house. It is believed when the French find their violent measures do not have the effect they were led to expect, that they will change their system.

The subject of direct taxes has been before Congress, and the Committee on Ways and Means are directed to bring in a bill for levying and collecting one. I doubt its final passage.

When the motion for calling for the balances from the debtor states was under discussion, Mr. Livingston made a motion to enquire into the title of the United States to the reserved lands sold by Connecticut. I presume by letters from the state, this has occasioned much alarm. I do not believe the motion will be again called up, or that any measure will be adopted that will affect the title of those who purchased the land.

I thank you for the manner in which you inform me of my election to the next Congress, and for your wishes that my situation may be happy. I can only say that all my exertions shall be to make it useful and beneficial to my country. With great esteem and regard, I am, your Excellency's most ob't. servant.

JAMES DAVENPORT.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, Jan. 27, 1797.

Sir,

I feel myself under peculiar obligations for your letter of the 23d instant. If information from us to our friends is valuable, their sentiments on public business in return, are at once necessary and very grateful.

The course our measures are taking in the House of Representatives can't, I think, afford pleasure to the discerning friends of our country. The resolve for a direct tax was carried by a small majority, among whom are several who voted for it merely to give opportunity for a bill. My own opinion has been that we ought to organize a system, and leave the imposition and apportionment to a future session. In that case, the public mind might be drawn gradually to the subject, and the measure rendered more palatable. On this ground, the federal side of the House ought to have stood. It has as yet been impossible to produce any union of sentiment or concert. I fear that will continue notwithstanding any exertions to avoid the mischievous consequences of division on so interesting a matter.

The House already has voted a reduction of the military establishment, and I foresee an onset is to be made on the small naval establishment. Yesterday, the report of a select committee for an increase of the salary of the officers of government was rejected by a considerable majority.

I sent to your son a few days since a paper containing the President's communication on our relations with France. I will take care to forward the "Censor" of the last month. I have the pleasure to inform you of our health, and to be with respect your obedient, humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

Philadelhhia, Feb. 10, 1797.

Sir,

I am honoured with your letter of the 6th instant. The continuance of public confidence amidst the embarrassments of the public councils is a gratifying circumstance ; I hope the proceedings of Congress will not impair it. In that case one of the evils to be apprehended from disunion on interesting points will be avoided.

The attempt in the House to reduce the military establishment from four to three regiments failed. Two companies of light dragoons are deranged. Two bills for increase of compensation, the last from the Senate, have been rejected. Nothing effectual, if anything at all, will be done in that respect this session. The paper I send herewith, contains the report of a committee on the naval ar-

mament. An amendment to the first resolution providing for the suspension of manning the three ships mentioned in the first resolution, has been moved and carried to-day in a committee of the whole. Although it is not probable they would be completed so as to put to sea before next session, the measure wears the appearance of instability, and a dereliction of the actual use of their small force, at this time unfortunate to our affairs. The second resolution will be lost, and small hopes remain of the success of the last.

It would be unjust to ascribe to our friends, who differ in opinion from us on this and other important measures, a want of attachment to our own country or a crouching spirit to another. Their conduct is to be traced to an unreasonable prejudice against past expense, and a want of comprehensive views, or an enlightened policy in arranging and steadily conducting the affairs of an independent nation. It is not certain that a more decided opposition than a silent vote, would promote the public good. It is certain in the House it would have no effect; it might only serve to increase disunion among ourselves, be followed by distraction of public sentiment, and although on a personal account it is accompanied with extreme chagrin, silence may be a sacrifice which public duty requires.

A letter from Mr. Pinckey at Bordeaux announces a favourable reception from the people of that place, and that he was hastening to Paris; advices of consequence from him may soon be expected.

I form no conjectures of the course that will be pursued as to revenue; the want of concert at the beginning of the session has lost us advantages we possessed, and I fear now put them out of our power. The Secretary of the Treasury has drawn two bills, one apportioning and imposing the tax, the other for collecting it. Both are reported with no essential alterations. The last I wished might be passed and the other postponed.

We have received two celebrated letters written by Mr. Burke against the ministry for entering on negotiations of peace. Though but lately put to the press, they have run to the eighth edition. He considers the republic of France as an Algiers in the centre of Europe, with whom the civilized world can hold no communion. Whether he be correct or not in his main point, the pamphlet is full of original sentiment relative to the Jacobins in England, France, and the world, highly valuable to every country, and to ours as much as any one. There are but one or two here; I hope they will soon be reprinted.

Judge Ellsworth, the next day after his arrival, was taken with a fever which has confined him ever since. It is meliorating, and I expect he will get out in a few days. I forgot to mention that Mr. Adams has been declared to be chosen chosen President, and Mr. Jefferson Vice-President. I understand the latter may be expected here before the session ends. I shall put under cover some newspapers containing the last advices from abroad.

If there be nothing in this detail to give you pleasure, you will rejoice in the continuance of the health of the family, who join me in the respectful and affectionate sentiments with which I am, your obedient, humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

[New York,] Feb. 17, 1797.

I groan, my dear sir, at the disgraceful course of our affairs. I pity all those who are officially in the vortex. The behaviour of Congress in the present crisis, is a new political phenomenon. They must be severely arraigned before the bar of the public. How unfortunate that our friends suffer themselves by their passiveness, to be confounded in the guilt! Yours, truly,

A. H.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, February 20th, 1797.

The session has nearly come to a conclusion; nothing has yet been done; even the appropriations for the current expenses of government, are not yet made. The conduct of Congress is a political phenomenon, over which I would if possible draw a veil; but it cannot be concealed that there has been no system, no concert, no pride, and no industry. This has arisen from various causes, but chiefly from the mode of establishing committees after having excluded the executive officers from that just and reasonable influence which is due to experience and information; they have found that the popular advantages which their chairmen derive from an access to official documents, renders them too conspicuous in the eyes of the country. A spirit of envy, of rivalry and ambition has been excited in their own body which they are not able to manage. Hence, eternal speeches, captious criticisms, and new projects, are found to consume all the time which ought to be devoted to business. A sense of disgrace, and an experience in the country of some evil consequences, can alone produce a cure, and a sure one in this way will be soon effected.

Nothing has been heard from Mr. Pinckney since his arrival at Bourdeaux. I have not a doubt that he will be received, and that what he will say will be accepted as satisfactory. The game of hypocrisy will, however, be probably continued, and our commerce disturbed for some time to come. I shall send herewith, the papers relating to France. Nothing will probably be done this session on the subject of direct taxes. All men know that a tax was indispensable; there has, however, been so much said formerly against direct taxes, that but few have the courage to speak out. I have, however, done my duty. I knew the tax to be necessary—the plan I have prepared is a good one, and if adopted, would not only establish the government and public credit more than any one measure, but would lead the States to improve their own systems. Moreover, it would not be generally unpopular; the people have more sense, patriotism and justice than to complain; they wish to have the debt extinguished, and they are desirous of seeing the national establishments equal to the maintenance of the rights and honour of the country; in short, I know that the measure will be adopted, and with the general consent of the people. I enclose bills which I prepared, developing the system.

JAMES HILLHOUSE TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, March 4, 1797.

Sir,

It was with peculiar satisfaction I received your favour of the 13th ult., and am fully of opinion with you, that a very great proportion of the evils we suffer, have been brought upon us by the imprudence and indiscretion of the people of our own country. If we mean to preserve to ourselves the rights and benefits of neutrality, we ought to be perfectly impartial in all our conduct towards the belligerent nations.

Congress closed their session at a late hour last night, and tho' they have not done all that could be wished, yet we have been able to get through those things that were of indispensable necessity. We have given some aid to the revenue, though not so great as was to be wished, or as is necessary to make such an impression upon our national debt as the public good requires; if we could provide revenue adequate to the discharge of our foreign debt as fast as the instalments fell due, it would in my opinion be a very important attainment.

Mr. Tracy is much out of health, but I cannot but hope that on his return to the salubrious air of Connecticut, he will recover his health. With sentiments of the highest respect and esteem, I am, your excy's most ob't humble servant,

JAMES HILLHOUSE.

N. B. We have no news from Mr. Pinckney since his arrival at Paris.

With this session ended Washington's administration. Not to review here the benefits which had accrued to the country from the direct action of the government, in the retrieval of ruined credit, the creation of a sound currency, the settlement of foreign relations, the revival of agriculture, of arts, of commerce and manufactures—in contemplating this, the most momentous period of the Constitutional Government, there is one object which those eight years had effected, of greater moment than all; that which the Constitution itself had been designed to effect, and towards the accomplishment of which, all the measures of the administration had tended. It was the creation of NATIONAL UNITY.

Habituated as we are at this later day, to regard the individuality of the American people as a thing of course, to look upon its division as an order of things which would be new, accustomed rather to speculate on the future pros-

pects of that nation than the means by which it was rendered one, there are few persons who rightly appreciate the difficulties which attended its nationalization. History does not present us another example of different states or colonies, with different opinions, prejudices, interests, and in a certain degree, institutions, who by the mere action of a political system, have been fused into one. Conquest has sometimes merged the vanquished nation into the victor. A common danger has often caused, as in the original case of the colonies, alliances and leagues. It was reserved for the American Constitution to turn such league into national union—and a policy like that of the first administration was necessary to render that union enduring. It was this intended union which had been the source of opposition; it was according to the degree in which particular measures favoured it, that they were contested. Though the grounds of actual dispute were often different, in almost every case the motive was the same. The Judiciary, the funding system, the assumption of the State debts, the creation of the National Bank, the revenue system, all these were devised, with other and great objects, it is true, but still all shaped to bear upon the one great plan of union, and were all opposed on that ground. The measures were successful; minor interests were swallowed up in the greater, and by the time that Washington left the presidential chair, they had become an integral part of the government. Opposition, and a powerful one existed, but that opposition was no longer sectional, it was diffused. Henceforth it might overturn the government, but it could not separate the Union.

It was to the gigantic intellect of one man, perhaps more than to all others together, that the developement of this principle of unity was owing. With a clear estimation of its necessity—with a scope and comprehensiveness of mind which enabled him to grapple with every diffi-

culty; as bold in execution as he was profound in suggestion; occupying a station above all others adapted to the object, Alexander Hamilton projected that system of measures which completed what the Constitution had begun; measures which, affecting all classes, in every part of the country, should interest, if not every man, at least men every where, in the preservation of the government. Once carried out, he knew that though he himself might fall—though his party might be annihilated, still his end would be accomplished, and whatever party followed must hold power at the expense of the object for which they pretended to seek it. Experience has long since proved not only the truth of these views, but the adaptation of the measures intended to effect them.

The purity and wisdom of Washington's administration needs no longer a defence. The time has been when such men as Paine, and Callender, and Bache, and Duane, libelled and were listened to, but it has passed. The best commentary on that government is found in the fact, that the country has been most prosperous when its policy has been most nearly imitated, and that its bitterest opponents have been driven to adopt in turn almost every characteristic measure.

Just before his final retirement, Washington held his last formal levee. An occasion more respectable in simplicity, more imposing in dignity, more affecting in the sensations which it awakened, the ceremonials of rulers never exhibited. There were the great chiefs of the republic of all parties and opinions; veterans of the war of independence, weather stained and scarred; white haired statesmen, who, in retirement, were enjoying the fruits of former toil; there were his executive counsellors and private friends; ministers of foreign governments, whose veneration approached that of his countrymen; citizens, who came to offer the tribute of a respect, sincere and disinterested. Little was there of the pageantry

of courts, little of the glitter which attends the receptions of royalty; yet in the grave assemblage that stood in that unadorned chamber, there was a majesty which these knew not. The dignitaries of a nation had come together to bid farewell to one, who at their own free call, by their own willing trust—not as an honor to be coveted, but as a duty to be discharged—had in turn led their armies and executed their laws; one who now, his last task worthily fulfilled, was to take his place again among them, readier to relinquish than he had been to undertake power; a soldier, without stain upon his arms; a ruler, without personal ambition; a wise and upright statesman; a citizen of self sacrificing patriotism; a man pure, unblemished and true in every relation he had filled; one to whom all ages should point as the testimony that virtue and greatness had been and could be united.

And he who was the object of this gathering—what thoughts crowded upon his mind, what recollections filled the vista of the sixty odd years which had passed over him, what changes of men, opinions, society had he seen! Great changes, indeed, in the world and its old notions; the growling dissatisfaction of certain English emigrants at customary tyrannies and new intended ones, had taken form and shape; embodied itself into principles and vindicated them; blazed up an alarming beacon to the world's eyes as the Sacred Right of Rebellion; fought battles; asserted independence, and maintained it at much cost of bloodshed; made governments after its own new fangled fashion; impressed a most unwilling idea on history—the doctrine of popular sovereignty; one which had proved contagious and had been adopted elsewhere, running riot indeed in its novelty. And out of all this confusion there had arisen the nation which he had presided over, already become great and factious in its greatness, with a noble birthright, noble virtues, energies and intellect;

with great faults and passions, that unchecked, would as in lusty individual manhood, lead to its ruin.

What was to be the Future of that nation? Dark clouds hung over it, dangers threatened it, enemies frowned upon it—the worst enemy was within. License might blast in a few hours the growth of years; faction destroy the careful work of the founders. On this he had left his great, solemn charge, like the last warning of a father to his children.

The men who stood round him, the men who had passed away, and whose forms were there in his mind's eye only—Franklin, Morris, the two Adamses, Hancock, Greene, Jay, and that host of compatriots living and dead, honored already as of remote and ancient days, canonized in men's minds, the ancestry of their virtuous of all times, the objects of "hero worship" even in their own generation.

Himself—uneducated son of a farmer in the provinces of a distant empire; wandering surveyor of the Alleghany forests; partisan officer; representative of some revolted colonists in a congress of other like outlaws; leader of an army of half armed rebels; general, victorious over the tried veterans of Europe; statesman, who had helped to solve the vast problem of government; ruler by acclamation of the youngest born of nations, treating with kings and princes as their equal; now sinking back into the great mass of three million individuals, to be no more among them in the eye of the law than any other.

What strifes had he gone through, not least with himself! How had he made passion bend to principle, impulse yield to will; how had he borne misunderstanding, calumny, desertion; withstood temptations; refrained from vengeance; how had he trod firmly the road he had marked out or which destiny assigned, sustained by courage, faith, conscience!

Was it strange that there were few smiles at the last reception day of Washington, or that tears fell from eyes unused to them upon the hand that many pressed for the last time?

The relation in which the Secretaries had stood with the President had been one of respectful but affectionate intimacy. Familiarity with him was a thing impossible, but the most cordial and unreserved friendship was extended to all whom he trusted and esteemed. The Secretaries of State and of War had been his fellow soldiers; the Secretary of the Treasury had, as it were, grown up under his eye. The pure morals and straight forwardness of these men had secured his confidence, and a mutual feeling of attachment arose from their association. The simplicity and military frankness of Pickering, the kindly nature and refinement of McHenry, the warm heartedness and bonhommie of Wolcott; all won upon his regard. On their part there was a no less sincere love for their chief. There are those, devotion to whom is no degradation. Washington was such an one, and to him it was rendered in the spirit of men who respected themselves. Among all connected with him, either in military or civil life, this sentiment was retained. His death hallowed his memory in their hearts to a degree and with a sanctity which none can know who have not heard from their own lips, none can feel who were not of them. And in like wise the wife and family of Washingington were cherished. They had been universally beloved on their own account; and the hand of fate, in depriving them of a husband and father, as it were bequeathed them to the tender care of a nation. There was something beautiful in these sentiments, in a land where the ties that bind men depend so little on associations.

Wolcott, among others, had enjoyed much of the domestic society of the President's house. His gentle and

graceful wife had been regarded with maternal tenderness by Mrs. Washington, and was the friend and correspondent of her eldest daughter. His child had been used to climb, confident of welcome, the knees of the chief; and though so many years his junior, while Wolcott's character and judgment had been held in respect by the President, his personal and social qualities had drawn towards him a warm degree of interest.

On leaving the seat of government, Washington presented, it is believed, to all his chief officers, some token of regard. To Wolcott he gave a piece of plate. Mrs. Washington gave to his wife, when visiting her for the last time, a relic still more interesting. Asking her if she did not wish a memorial of the General, Mrs. Wolcott replied, 'yes,' she 'should like a lock of his hair.' Mrs. Washington, smiling, took her scissors and cut off for her a large lock of her husband's, and one of her own. These, with the originals of Washington's letters, Wolcott preserved with careful veneration, and divided between his surviving children.

"On the retirement of General Washington," says Wolcott, "being desirous that my personal interests should not embarrass his successor, and supposing that some other person might be preferred to myself, I tendered my resignation to Mr. Adams before his inauguration. The tender was declined, and I retained office under my former commission."

# CHAPTER XIV.

## SPRING OF 1797.

On the 1st of March, Washington had addressed a note to the Senate, desiring them to attend in their chamber on Saturday, the 4th, at 10 o'clock, "to receive any communication which the President of the United States might then lay before them, touching their interests." In conformity with this summons, the Senate assembled on that day, and commenced their thirteenth session. The oath of office was administered by Mr. Bingham to Mr. Jefferson, who thereupon took the chair. The new Senators were then sworn, and the Vice President delivered a brief address. The Senate then repaired to the chamber of the House of Representatives, to attend the administration of the oath of office to the new President. Mr. Adams entered, accompanied by the heads of departments, the Marshal of the district and his officers, and took his seat in the Speaker's chair; the Vice President and Secretary of the Senate were seated in advance on his right, and the late Speaker and Clerk on the left; the justices of the Supreme Court sat before the President, the foreign ministers and members of the House in their usual seats. Washington, once more a private citizen, sat in front of the judges. The rest of the chamber was occupied by citizens.

Mr. ADAMS then arose and delivered his inaugural speech. This address was brief and well suited to the

occasion. After adverting to the circumstances which led to the formation of the new constitution, he expressed the unqualified approbation with which, in a foreign land and apart from the seat of controversy, he had first perused it, and the undiminished confidence which, after eight years of experience, he entertained of its fitness. He remarked briefly on the abuses to which it was subject, and against which it became the duty of the people to guard; and having disclosed his opinions of general policy, pledged himself anew to the support of the government. The oath of office was then administered by Chief Justice Ellsworth, the other justices attending, after which he retired.

As the history of the period now entered upon is obscure—existing in fact, so far as the public knowledge extends, chiefly in newspapers and fugitive publications; as misrepresentation and misunderstanding have prevailed widely respecting the policy of the dominant party, and the designs of its leaders; and as the then Chief Magistrate has himself recorded statements corroborative of these calumnies and errors, a more detailed narrative of its principal occurrences will be entered upon, than has hitherto been thought necessary, when following the beaten track of Washington's administration. To this object, an indispensable preliminary is an examination of the character of the new President.

Among the sources from which it may be deduced, he has himself furnished some of the most important. His letters to the Boston Patriot,[a] the papers known as the Cunningham Correspondence,[b] and the letters to his wife recently published, with some scattered documents, will

[a] "Correspondence of the late President Adams; originally published in the Boston Patriot." Boston, 8vo., 1809.

[b] "Correspondence between the Hon. John Adams, late President of the United States, and the late William Cunningham, Esq., beginning in 1803 and ending in 1812." Boston. 8vo., 1823. See, also, "A Review of the Correspondence between the Hon. John Adams, late President of the United States, and the late Wm. Cunningham, by Timothy Pickering," 8vo. Salem, 1824.

prove to be extensive, and it is believed, unexceptionable materials.

The Cunningham papers, as it is already known to many, consist of his correspondence with a relative of that name, extending from 1803 to 1812. They contain animadversions on many leading men of both parties, interspersed with much laudation of himself and of his son. Though of no other historical importance, and with little connection of subjects or ideas, they afford, in their unguarded confidences, some valuable hints and suggestions. The letters to the Patriot were published in 1809, and appear to have been commenced under the sting of some newspaper reflections, which had awakened his ire against his former political friends, and led him into a fragmentary history of his administration. Much of it is in answer to the pamphlet published by Mr. Hamilton in 1800. The intensity of feeling under which they were written, may be imagined from a description, by their author, of the passion which must have dictated them. "The desire of the esteem of others," he says, "is as real a want of nature as hunger, and the neglect and contempt of the world, as severe a pain as the gout or the stone."[a] And of their object, he says in a letter to Cunningham, "The great body [of the federalists] are silent and inactive, and not a man of them has ever stepped forth to vindicate me, or express the slightest indignation at the eternal revilings which appear in their newspapers." * * * "I will either throw off that intolerable load of obloquy and insolence they have thrown upon me, or I will perish in the struggle. In vain you will sooth me with the hopes of justice from posterity—from any future historian. Too many falsehoods are already transmitted to posterity that are irrevocable. Records themselves are often liars. No human being but myself can do me justice, and I shall not

[a] "Discourses on Davila," No. 4.—Pickering's "Review," p. 3.

be believed. All I can say will be imputed to vanity and self-love."[a]

In the Patriot letters, nevertheless, Mr. Adams attempts to do himself this justice, not a little, it must be confessed, at the expense of others. They purport to lift the veil from the recesses of the cabinet chamber—to disclose the moving causes of events, and the hidden secrets of men's hearts. The scenes narrated in them are almost melo-dramatic in their character. Even a plot is not wanting. Mr. Adams is surrounded by a band of desperate conspirators in the shape of his secretaries and their friends, in and out of Congress—Hamilton being the chief villain of the piece. War with France, and through it the subversion of the government, and the establishment of a monarchy on its ruins, are the least of their intended crimes. As the intrigue ripens, a good genius in the shape of Mr. Gerry, reveals its existence, and points out the mode of thwarting it. Mr. Adams happily effects this, makes peace with France, and becomes thereby the saviour of his country. His vivid imagination has clothed the chief actors with all the requisite attributes of their respective parts. At once gloomy and ferocious, the secretaries vary the cabinet councils by sullen silence or furious outbreaks of passion, and from time to time Hamilton, muffled and masked, stalks over the stage, directing his subordinates or menacing the hero, who, amidst all, preserves the dignity and calmness for which he was so remarkable. The later Cunningham letters show the melancholy sequel of this drama. Mr. Adams has experienced the usual fate of patriots—ingratitude. Reviled by the Hamiltonians, whose designs he had exposed; neglected by the democrats, to whom he could be no longer useful; deserted, in short, by all, he had retired to private life, soured and discontented, to vent his spleen on all men, and principally on the federalists.

[a] Letter XXXVI.

When an individual whose patriotism, integrity, and public services have rendered his name sacred among his countrymen, elevated by their gratitude to a more conspicuous and trying post, requiring different qualifications, is found too late to be unfitted by nature for its duties; every good and virtuous citizen, lamenting the errors of honest but mistaken judgment, will desire to palliate or overlook them. But when in addition to errors of judgment, faults of the heart also are disclosed; when the magistrate yields himself to suspicion and envy, to the indulgence of personal animosity and the gratification of a vanity which refuses counsel and is obstinate in wrong; when from mortified pride and disappointed ambition he turns against his original friends and lends his countenance to falsehoods invented by their enemies; our sorrow gives way to indignation and we forget the patriot in the apostate. The presidential career of Mr. Adams furnishes a pitiable instance of how completely the mistakes, and still more the faults of maturer years blot out the remembrance of early and important services. By the federalists, with few exceptions among the more prominent, he came to be ultimately regarded as the main cause of their defeat and the subversion of their political system; by the great body of the anti-federal party, he has been handed down with opprobrium as a supporter of the very system he betrayed. The writings which have been referred to, totally unsuccessful as a defence of his public course, did not redeem him in the opinion of the latter, and exasperated still more the resentment of the former party.

His chief magistracy commenced at a critical period. The influence of revolutionary France in this country, though still powerful from its theoretical democracy, still dangerous from its active intrigue, had nevertheless received a severe shock, as the instability of its government, and its violence and injustice became apparent. The

tide of popular enthusiasm in her favor was already on the ebb, and the first event which followed his inauguration hastened its recession. It needed only consistency on his part to have forever prevented its return. But consistency unfortunately, to borrow a phrase of his own, "belonged to other people." Of a restless and irritable temperament; jealous of other's praise, and suspicious of their influence; obstinate and yet fickle; actuated by an ambition which could bear neither opposition nor lukewarmness, and vain to a degree approaching insanity; he was of himself incapable alike of conceiving or of acting upon a settled system of policy, and was to others as easy a subject for indirect management as he was impracticable to more legitimate approach. He possessed an active but an ill regulated mind, varied learning without elegance in its employment. His patriotism was undoubted, his morals beyond reproach. With the noblest impulses and the meanest passions, he presents a portrait which, in its contradictory features, resembles more the shifting image of a dream than the countenance of an actual being.

As was his character, so proved Mr. Adams' administration; flickering, unstable, without fixed rule or definite object. Many causes contributed to this, but two were especially active. Mr. Adams never was consistently a federalist. The bias of his mind on the one hand was towards radicalism; his temper on the other was despotic. In his unguarded hours, he sometimes startled his hearers with doctrines destructive of all order; in his moments of irritation, by the avowal of principles as subversive of liberty. He by turns defended the mob, and advocated hereditary power. The other cause was the conflicting influences to which he was exposed. There was the settled, far sighted, national policy of the federalists, who at the commencement of his administration were cordially united. Interchange of opinion between the cabinet and

distinguished men in different parts of the country, a common object and mutual concession for its attainment, produced a unity of action which, though slower to set in motion, was yet in the end always superior to mere party dicipline. On the other side, the weaknesses of the President's character and the instability of his principles were well known and skilfully taken advantage of by the opposition.

It has been stated that the idea was entertained of securing a double chance against Mr. Jefferson by supporting equally Mr. Pinckney and Mr. Adams for the Presidency, and that among the federalists there were some, even at the northward, who would not have regretted an accident which should have given the first place to the former. Among them Mr. Hamilton was conspicuous; and the fact, when known to Mr. Adams, awakened that enmity which, studiously aggravated, pursued its object even beyond the grave. This was the entering wedge by which it was calculated, and as the end proved, not without foresight, to separate Mr. Adams from his party. It was important to efface from his mind as far as possible the remembrance of Mr. Jefferson's rivalship, and to restore their earlier intimacy; to revive what there was of accordance in their opinions, and most of all to destroy the influence with him of the man Mr. Jefferson himself most hated and feared. Merely to throw a brand into the federal camp was of itself an object. An instance of his manner of effecting these ends may be found in a letter to Mr. Adams, written on the 28th of December preceding the election and shortly before its issue was known. After remarking that "the public and the public papers had been much occupied lately in placing them in opposition to each other," and that he "confidently trusted they had felt less of it themselves;" he proceeds to notice the probable result in the choice of Mr. Adams.

"I never for a single moment expected any other issue; and though I shall not be believed, yet it is not the less true, that I never wished any other. My neighbours, as my compurgators, could aver this fact, as seeing my occupations and my attachments to them. *It is possible indeed, that even you may be cheated of your succession by a trick worthy the subtlety of your arch friend of New York,* who has been able to make of your real friends tools for defeating their and your just wishes. Probably, however, he will be disappointed as to you, and my inclinations put me out of his reach. * * * I have no ambition to govern men. It is a painful and thankless office. And never since the day you signed the treaty of Paris, has our horizon been so overcast. I devoutly wish you may be able to shun for us this war which will destroy our agriculture, commerce, and credit. If you do, *the glory will be all your own.* And that your administration may be filled with glory and happiness to yourself, and advantage to us, is the sincere prayer of one who, though in the course of our voyage, various little incidents have happened or been contrived to separate us, yet retains for you the solid esteem of the times when we were working for our independence, and sentiments of sincere respect and attachment."[a]

This letter was enclosed in one to Mr. Madison, who, it seems "exercised a discretion" committed to him, by communicating its contents alone. To that gentleman, Mr. Jefferson expressed the same sentiments with regard to his preference of the second place in the government, concluding with the significant remark, that "If Mr. Adams could be induced to administer the government on its true principles, quitting his bias for an English constitution, it would be worthy consideration whether it would not be for the public good to come to a good understanding with him as to his future elections."[b] In a subsequent letter, he reverts to the subject.

"Mr. Adams and myself, were cordial friends from the beginning of the revolution. Since our return from Europe, some little incidents have happened which were capable of affecting a jealous mind like his. His deviation from that line of politics on which we had been united, has not made me less sensible of the rectitude of his heart; and I wished him to know this and also another truth—that I am sincerely pleased at having escaped the late draught for the helm, and have not a wish that he stands in the way of. That he should be convinced of these truths is important to our mutual understanding, and perhaps to the harmony and good of the public service."[c]

[a] Jefferson's Writings, III. p. 338. [b] Ibid. p. 340. [c] Ibid. p. 348.

Never was the *nolo episcopari* more strenuously asserted, and never more credulously believed. Mr. Jefferson says again:

"My letters inform me that Mr. Adams speaks of me with great friendship, and with satisfaction in the prospect of administering the government in concurrence with me. I am glad of the first information, because, though I saw that our ancient friendship was affected by a little leaven produced partly by his constitution, partly by the contrivance of others, yet I never felt a diminution of confidence in his integrity, and retained a solid affection for him. His principles of government I knew to be changed, but conscientiously changed. As to my participating in the administration, if by that he meant the Executive cabinet, both inclination and duty will shut that door to me." [a]

The good effects of this policy in removing any prejudice against Mr. Jefferson, was substantially shown at the outset of Mr. Adams' administration; the manifestation of its success in exciting his animosity against Hamilton, was later, but as sure. To such a height did that animosity finally rise, that it extended itself to every one suspected of attachment to the Ex-Secretary, and indeed, to every public measure of which he was or had been an advocate. His very name was to the President's imagination as hateful as that of Banquo to Macbeth, and from the same sort of apprehension. The parallel might be carried further.

It is remarkable that the persons with whom Mr. Adams was in reality upon terms of actual friendship, or perhaps rather the men who possessed most influence over him, were never to be found among those most distinguished for their attachment to federal principles, or for their exertions in support of the federal administration. They were chiefly among a certain clan of anti-federalists, those of the ultra democrats who had chanced to be his associates in his earlier political life. Of all men, however, the one who seems to have obtained and kept

[a] Jefferson's Writings III. p. 346.

the greatest power over him, was MR. GERRY, a known opponent of the Constitution, and always an anti-federalist. This gentleman is almost the only man of whom Mr. Adams has, in his writings, uniformly spoken well. Of nearly every federalist of note, he has recorded some contemptuous, or some disparaging observation, even when his feelings have not not led him to do more. Besides Mr. Hamilton—Pickering, Mc Henry, Wolcott, Cabot, Ames, the Pinckneys, Goodhue, Hillhouse, Bayard, Harper, Gore, Sedgwick, Tracy, and others, have shared his dislike. The leaders of opposition, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Madison, and others, have been by turns praised and censured; of Mr. Gerry alone, but one language is ever used. The consequences of this partiality were important. Most of the federalists who have been named, were personally favorable to Mr. Adams—all of them certainly, sincerely desirous of contributing to the success of his administration ; and yet at its very commencement, he contrived to excite their anxiety and distrust—its termination found almost every one alienated from, if not openly hostile to him. It is so rarely that one man is right against all the world, that this fact alone would render it probable, that some inherent defect in Mr. Adams' organization, was its cause. The explanation is to be sought in the characteristics that have been attributed to him. Men thus constituted, forever have before their eyes the dread of being considered under management or influence, the fear that others will absorb the glory they themselves covet. They will be found oftener personally at variance with their colleagues, their political allies and supporters, than with their opponents. By the latter indeed, they may be defeated, by the former they may be overshadowed.

Some of the instances in which Mr. Adams has attacked more specifically the characters of his friends, will be hereafter noticed. One or two will serve for the present

illustration of his general temper. They are taken from letters to his wife, written at a period when no collisions with his party had yet embittered him. The first was written about the middle of January, the second just after his inauguration. Whatever may be thought of his illiberal remarks on Messrs. Cabot and Ames, there can be but one opinion with regard to his observations on Washington's retirement. The "being of too much sensibility" to take part in that "exhibition," might at least have imagined the cause of the grief shown there. The jealousy of Washington's superior popularity, thus manifested, besides its direct light on Mr. Adams' character, sheds that of probability on a fact stated by both Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Pickering as of current report; that Mr. Adams, at the time of the first Presidential election, openly expressed his irritation that some votes had been intentionally diverted from him, to avoid an equality with Washington; thereby preventing his having an equal chance for the first office. His resentment at those who wished to put Mr. Pinckney on a par with him, is well established.

PHILA., Jan. 14, 1797. "Mr. Madison is to retire. It seems the mode of becoming great, is to retire. Madison, I suppose, after a retirement of a few years, is to be President or Vice President. Mr. Cabot, I suppose, after aggrandizing his character in the shade a few years, is to be some great thing too; and Mr. Ames, &c. &c. &c. It is marvellous how political plants grow in the shade. Continued day-light and sunshine show our faults and record them. Our persons, voices, clothes, gait, air, sentiments, &c., all become familiar to every eye, and ear, and understanding, and they diminish in proportion, upon the same principle that no man is a hero to his wife or valet de chambre. These gentlemen are in the right to run away and hide. Tell Mr. Cabot so, if you see him. His countrymen will soon believe him to be a giant in a cave, and will go in a body and dig him out. I wish, but don't tell Cabot so, that they would dig up GERRY!"[a]

March 7, 1797. "It is the general report that there was more weeping than there has ever been at the representation of a tragedy. But whether it was from

[a] Letters of John Adams, addressed to his wife, edited by his grandson Charles Francis Adams. 12mo. Boston, 1841. vol. II. p. 240.

grief or joy, whether from the loss of their beloved President, or from the accession of an unbeloved one, or from the novelty of the thing, or from the sublimity of it arising from the multitude present, or whatever other cause, *I know not;* one thing I know, I am a being of too much sensibility to act any part well in such an exhibition. Perhaps there is little danger of my having such another scene to feel or behold.

The stillness and silence astonishes me. Every body talks of the tears, the full eyes, the streaming eyes, the triekling tears, &c., but all is enigma beyond. No one descends to particulars to say why or wherefore ; I am therefore left to suppose that it is all grief for the loss of their beloved."[a]

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The very first step of Mr. Adams on entering upon the duties of his office, was both characteristic of the heedlessness and imprudence of his nature, and indicative of the success of Mr. Jefferson's manœuvres. The account which, in 1809, he himself gave of the transaction, is sufficiently curious to be worth extracting. It should be premised that intelligence had arrived that Mr. Pinckney had not been received or recognized by the French authorities, and that the question of the course proper to be pursued by the United States on the occasion, engrossed the attention of all parties. The political opinions, the official rank of Mr. Pinckney, were severally alleged by the anti-federalists as sufficient grounds for his non-reception; and the great body even of the usual supporters of the government seemed still unwilling to relinquish the hope of accommodation. The principal characters of the federal party were themselves divided in opinion as to the measures to be adopted.

It was in this state of things, one demanding cool deliberation, and it would seem, the opinions at least of his constitutional advisers, that Mr. Adams found the country. But to his own narration:

"The morning after my inauguration, Mr. Fisher Ames made me a visit to take leave. His period in Congress had expired, and the delicacy of his health,

[a] Letters of John Adams, II., p. 247.

the despondency of his disposition, and despair of a reëlection from the increase of the opposite party in his district, had induced him to decline to stand a candidate. I was no longer to have the assistance of his counsel and eloquence, *though Mr. Hamilton continued to enjoy both until his death.* Mr. Ames was no doubt one of Mr. Hamilton's privy council when he *resolved* to send a new commission of three. Mr. Ames, with much gravity and solemnity, advised me to institute a new commission to France. Our affairs with that republic were in an unpleasant and dangerous situation, and the people in a long recess of Congress must have some object on which to fix their contemplation and their hopes, and he recommended Mr. George Cabot for the northern states to be one of the three, if a commission was sent, or alone if but one was to go. I answered Mr. Ames that the subject had almost engrossed my attention for a long time ; that I should determine nothing suddenly ; that I should make deliberate inquiries concerning characters, and maturely consider the qualities and qualifications of candidates before anything was finally determined. Mr. Ames departed for Massachusetts.

" I had rolled all these things in my own mind long before. The French nation and their government were in a very umbrageous and inflammable disposition. Much delicacy and deliberation were necessary in the choice of characters. Most of the prominent characters in America were as well known at Paris as they were in Philadelphia. I had sometimes thought of sending Mr. Madison and Mr. Hamilton to join Mr. Pinckney in a new commission. I had thought of Mr. Ames himself, as well as Mr. Cabot, Judge Dana, Mr. Gerry, and many others in the northern, middle, and southern states. I had thought much of Mr. Jefferson, but had great doubts whether the constitution would allow me to send the Vice-President abroad. The nation at large had assigned him a station which I doubted whether he had a right to abandon, or I a right to invite him to relinquish though but for a time.

" I had great doubts about reappointing Mr. Pinckney. He might have been so affected with horrors he had seen or heard in France, as to have uttered some expressions, which, reported by spies to the ruling powers, might have excited prejudices against him which would ensure his second rejection and that of his colleagues too ; but as I knew of no such accusation, I could not bear the thought of abandoning him. I had not time to communicate all these reflections to Mr. Ames, and moreover I had business of more importance to do.

" I had long wished to avail myself and the public of the fine talents and amiable qualities and manners of Mr. Madison. Soon after Mr. Ames left me, I sought and obtained an interview with Mr. Jefferson. With this gentleman I had lived on terms of intimate friendship for five-and-twenty years, had acted with him in dangerous times and arduous conflicts, and always found him assiduous, laborious, and, as far as I could judge, upright and faithful. Though by this time I differed with him in opinion by the whole horizon concerning the practicability and success of the French revolution and some other points, I HAD NO REASON TO THINK THAT HE DIFFERED MATERIALLY FROM ME WITH REGARD TO OUR NATIONAL CONSTITUTION. I did not think that the rumbling noise of party calumny ought to discourage me from consulting men whom I knew to be attached to the

interest of the nation, and whose experience, genius, learning, and travels had eminently qualified them to give advice. I asked Mr. Jefferson what he thought of another trip to Paris, and whether he thought the constitution and the people would be willing to spare him for a short time. Are you determined to send to France? Yes. That is right, said Mr. Jefferson; but without considering whether the constitution will allow it or not, I am so sick of residing in Europe that I believe I shall never go there again. I replied, I own I have strong doubts whether it would be legal to appoint you; but I believe no other man could do the business so well. What do you think of sending Mr. Madison? Do you think he would accept of an appointment? I do not know, said Mr. Jefferson. Washington wanted to appoint him some time ago, and kept the place open for him a long time; but he never could get him to say that he would go. Other characters were considered and other conversation ensued. We parted as good friends as we had always lived; but we consulted together very little afterwards. Party violence soon rendered it impracticable, or, at least, useless; and this party violence was excited by Hamilton more than any other man. I WILL NOT TAKE LEAVE OF MR. JEFFERSON IN THIS PLACE WITHOUT DECLARING MY OPINION THAT THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HIM OF BLIND DEVOTION TO FRANCE, OF HOSTILITY TO ENGLAND, OF HATRED TO COMMERCE, OF PARTIALITY AND DUPLICITY IN HIS LATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BELLIGERENT POWERS,[a] ARE WITHOUT FOUNDATION."[b]

So far Mr. Adams on the conference with his great rival. Mr. Jefferson, in his "Ana," gives a slightly varied account of the same visit:

"He found me alone in my room, and shutting the door himself, said he was glad to find me alone, for that he wished a free conversation with me. He entered immediately on an explanation of the situation of our affairs with France, and the danger of a rupture with that nation, a rupture which would convulse the attachments of this country; that he was impressed with the necessity of an immediate mission to the Directory; that it would have been the first wish of his heart to have got me to go there, but that he supposed it was out of the question, as it did not seem justifiable for him to send away the person destined to take his place in case of accident to himself, nor decent to remove from competition one who was a rival in the public favour. That he had therefore concluded to to send a mission, which by its dignity should satisfy France, and by its selection from the three great divisions of the continent should satisfy all parts of the United States; in short, that he had determined to join Gerry and Madison to Pinckney, and he wished me to consult Mr. Madison for him."[c]

Mr. Jefferson says, in continuation, that he concurred with Mr. Adams as regarded himself. He thought, too, that Mr. Madison would not go, and on a conference with

[a] Those during Jefferson's administration.
[b] Boston Patriot, Letter XIII.
[c] "Ana," Jefferson's Writings, IV., p. 501.

the latter he confirmed the idea. A few days after, March 6th, he communicated this to Mr. Adams. "He immediately said that on consultation, some objections to that nomination had been made which he had not contemplated, and was going on with excuses which evidently embarrassed him," when they parted. Mr. Jefferson's inference was, that on that day when Mr. Adams first met the cabinet, they had dissuaded him from the idea.

Mr. Adams' account of the manner in which the proposition was received by the heads of department is as follows. The person to whom he first mentioned it, is supposed to have been Wolcott:

"From Mr. Jefferson, I went to one of the heads of department whom Mr. Washington had appointed, and I had no thoughts of removing. Indeed, I had then no objections to any of the secretaries. I asked him what he thought of sending Mr. Madison to France, with or without others? Is it determined to send to France at all? Determined? Nothing is determined till it is executed, smiling. But why not? I thought it deserved consideration. So it does; but suppose it determined, what do you think of sending Mr. Madison? Is it determined to send Mr. Madison? No: but it deserves consideration. Sending Mr. Madison will make dire work among the passions of our parties in Congress and out of doors through the states! Are we forever to be overawed and directed by party passions? All this conversation on my part was with the most perfect civility, good-humour, and, indeed, familiarity; but I found it excited a profound gloom and solemn countenance in my companion, which after some time broke out in: 'Mr. President, we are willing to resign.' Nothing could have been more unexpected to me than this observation. Nothing was further from my thoughts than to give any pain or uneasiness. I had said nothing that could possibly displease, except pronouncing the name of Madison. I restrained my surprise, however, and only said, I hope nobody will resign. I am satisfied with all the public officers.

"Upon further enquiries of the other heads of departments, and of other persons. I found that party passions had so deep and extended roots, that I seriously doubted whether the Senate would not negative Mr. Madison, if I should name him. Rather than expose him to a negative, or doubtful contest in the Senate, I concluded to omit him. If I had nominated Madison, I should have nominated Hamilton with him. The former I knew was much esteemed in France, the latter was rather an object of jealousy. But I thought the French would tolerate one for the sake of the other. And I thought too, that the manners of the one would soon wear off the prejudices against him, and probably make him a greater favourite than the other. But having given up Madison, I ought to give up Hamilton too. Who then should I name? I mentioned Mr.

Dana and Mr. Gerry to the heads of departments, and to many leading men in both Houses. They all preferred Mr. Dana. But it was evident enough to me that neither Dana nor Gerry was their man. Dana was appointed but refused. I then called the heads of departments together, and proposed Mr. Gerry. All the five voices were unanimously against him. Such inveterate prejudice shocked me. I said nothing, but was determined I would not be the slave of it. I knew the man infinitely better than all of them. He was nominated and approved, and finally saved the peace of the nation; for he alone discovered and furnished the evidence that X., Y. and Z. were employed by Talleyrand; and he alone brought home the direct, formal and official assurances, upon which the subsequent commission proceeded and peace was made.

I considered Mr. Ames' candidate, Mr. Cabot, as deliberately as any of the others, and with as favourable and friendly a disposition towards him as any other, without exception. But I knew his character and connections were as well known in France, particularly by Talleyrand, as Mr. Gerry's were; and that there were great objections against the former, and none at all against the latter. It would be therefore inexcusable in me to hazard the success of the mission merely to gratify the passions of a party in America, especially as I knew Mr. Gerry to say the least, to be full as well qualified by his studies, his experience, and every quality for the service, as the other.

* * * *

"This preference of Mr. Gerry to Mr. Cabot, was my first mortal offence against my sovereign heads of departments, and their disciples in all the states. It never was, or has been forgiven me by those who call themselves, or are called by others, 'the leading men' among the federalists."[a]

It will be noticed that there is much confusion in Mr. Adams' own account of the matter, and some discrepancy between it and that of Mr. Jefferson. Mr. Adams states that if he had nominated Mr. Madison, he would have nominated Mr. Hamilton also; Mr. Jefferson, that he had determined to join Gerry and Madison to Pinckney. Which of these two versions is accurate, it is difficult to say. It does not appear from Mr. Adams himself, that he named Hamilton to Mr. Jefferson, or to any member of the cabinet. To the first, it is probable he did not. It would at once have been objected to by Mr. Jefferson, and such an association would unquestionably have deterred Mr. Madison from going, even had he been otherwise willing. Had Mr. Hamilton been named to the cab-

[a] Boston Patriot, Letter XIII.

inet, it would have removed much of their objection to his proposed colleague, and the circumstance would certainly have been mentioned by some of them. The determination, if made, must have therefore been kept to himself. On the other hand, Mr. Jefferson positively states, that Gerry was to have been sent with Madison, and although that gentleman is not always high authority in matters of fact, yet as he had in this case no visible motive for deception, and as his memoranda appear to have been recorded at the time, while Mr. Adams' account was written twelve years after; there is strong ground for believing that the memory of the latter had betrayed him. The supposition is otherwise corroborated. Why has Mr. Adams given as a reason for relinquishing Mr. Madison, that he doubted whether the Senate would not negative him, when Mr. Jefferson had communicated his refusal of the nomination? Why, as he asserts, was it necessary to drop Hamilton, because Madison was dropped? Other members of the opposition there were, not inferior to Madison in ability and eminence, to connect with Hamilton.

Nor are these the only instances of confusion. Mr. Adams, forgetting the nomination of Gen. Marshall altogether, continues, that he *then* mentioned Mr. Dana and Mr. Gerry, and that the heads of departments all *preferred* Mr. Dana. According to the face of his account there were yet two to be appointed, and the preference of *one* would therefore be inexplicable. There was, however, but one vacancy left in the commission, and of the two names suggested, the secretaries wisely preferred Mr. Dana; it was not until the meeting of Congress, after Mr. Dana had been appointed and refused, that Mr. Gerry was finally nominated. Of the first appointment Col. Pickering relates that "Elbridge Gerry was Mr. Adams' choice, and it was with some difficulty that the heads of departments prevailed on him to substitute Mr. Dana;

but Mr. Dana declining the service, Mr. Adams recurred to the first object of his partiality, Mr. Gerry. Further opposition was in vain. One reason assigned by Mr. Adams for preferring Mr. Gerry was, that besides possessing the requisite talents, he was a firm man and superior to all the arts of French seduction!" [a] The truth of this commendation, as well as of the merits attributed to him above, will be hereafter examined.

But the discrepancies in the narrative are of less moment than the fact which is admitted. What but insanity could have led Mr. Adams, before even meeting his cabinet, to seek out in his defeated rival an adviser on a great question of policy, the one too, on which he differed from him, "by the whole horizon," and that, when the contest just gained had been fought on the very ground of that policy! How successful must have already been the impressions upon his mind to have led him to such a course, and how completely, yet unwittingly, has he betrayed them! Mr. Ames was one of the most distinguished, the most upright, the most honored patriots in the nation. He was on the point of retiring from public life, and Mr. Adams "was no longer to have the assistance of his counsel and eloquence;" yet his counsel at this moment, the last that it might ever be offered or obtained, was slighted. Although Mr. Adams had already revolved in his mind the subject of Mr. Ames' visit, he had not time to communicate his reflections to him; he had things of more importance to do; to consult not his cabinet, not his other political friends, but Mr. Jefferson. Mr. Ames was a well known friend of Hamilton; *he* was to enjoy his counsel and his eloquence, and herein lay the secret of the neglect shown to his advice, although in consonance with Mr. Adams' own views, and indeed intentions. Mr. Ames is therefore told by Mr. Adams, that he should "deter-

[a] Pickering's "Review," Section IV.

mine nothing suddenly; he should make deliberate enquiries concerning the qualities and qualifications of candidates before anything was determined;" and Mr. Jefferson the next moment is informed of his resolution to send a mission, and the characters already fixed upon to conduct it. His references to Mr. CABOT further disclose the hidden but deep seated motive. The preference of Mr. Gerry to Mr. Cabot was, he asserts, his first mortal offence against his sovereign heads of departments and their disciples, one for which he never was forgiven by them. The idea was but the echo of his own thoughts. Their preference of Cabot, another friend of Hamilton's, and one who as such receives Mr. Adams' abuse, first excited his coldness towards those "sovereigns" without sceptre and without dominion.

But a further light is thrown upon the origin of these events from another source. "There was supposed," to use the subdued expression of Mr. Jefferson's biographer, "to be not entire harmony of views between Mr. Adams and his cabinet, as Mr. Jefferson's sagacity had quickly perceived, and subsequent events fully confirmed the fact."[a] Mr. Jefferson had, as is intimated in the paragraph quoted from his "Ana," attributed to the opposition of his ministers, the defeat of Mr. Adams' intention to nominate Mr. Madison. He was acquainted with the President's friendship for Mr. Gerry, and his desire that he should be one of the envoys. An excellent opportunity thus afforded itself for checkmating the cabinet, and stirring up afresh Mr. Adams' suspicions of the Hamilton party. Accordingly just before the meeting of Congress, he writes to Mr. Gerry:

"I entirely commend your dispositions towards Mr. Adams; knowing his worth as intimately, and esteeming it as much as any one, and acknowledging the preference of his claims, if any I could have had, to the high office conferred

[a] Tucker's Life of Jefferson, II. p. 19.

upon him. But in truth, I had neither claims nor wishes on the subject, though I know it will be difficult to obtain belief of this. When I retired from this place and the office of Secretary of State, it was in the firmest contemplation of never more returning here. There had indeed been suggestions in the public papers, that I was looking towards a succession to the President's chair, but feeling a consciousness of their falsehood, and observing that the suggestions came from hostile quarters, I considered them as intended merely to excite public odium against me. I never in my life exchanged a word with any person on the subject, till I found my name brought forward generally, in competition with that of Mr. Adams. Those with whom I then communicated, could say if it were necessary, whether I met the call with desire, or even with a ready acquiescence, and whether from the first moment of my first acquiescence, I did not devoutly pray that the very thing might happen which has happened. The second office of this government is honourable and easy; the first is but a splendid misery.

"You express apprehensions that stratagems will be used to produce a misunderstanding between the President and myself. Though not a word having this tendency has ever been hazarded to me by any one, yet I consider as a certainty that nothing will be left untried to alienate him from me. *These machinations will proceed from the Hamiltonians by whom he is surrounded, and who are only a little less hostile to him than to me.*"[a]

The letter concluded with observations on the ancient topic of British influence in America, leading to war with France, and to our subjection to the interests of her rival, and on the writer's own heart-felt desire for peace with both nations, which had been his "constant object through his public life." "With respect to the English and French particularly, he had too often expressed to the former his wishes, and made to them propositions verbally, and in writing, officially and privately, to official and private characters, for them to doubt his views, if they would be content with equality."

That the inferences which have been deduced of the attempts to manage Mr. Adams, and of their success, are correct, and that this was one of them, a train of circumstances, extending through his administration, will tend to show. Some of the more immediate proofs may be found in its curious coincidence with the assertions of Mr. Adams, before quoted, that further consultation of Mr.

[a] Writings of Jefferson, III. 350.

Jefferson was rendered impracticable by the party violence excited by Hamilton, and by the endorsement of Mr. Jefferson's claim to good faith in his negotiation with the belligerent powers. Another corroboration is found in the facts attending the appointment, shortly after, of Mr. Gerry as one of the ambassadors—"by way of excellence," as Mr. Adams terms him, "my own ambassador, for I appointed him against the advice of all my ministers, to the furious provocation of Pinckney, and against the advice of all the Senators whom he could influence."[a]

Mr. Adams' narrative opens a field of remark which must be hereafter reëntered. At present, a few observations are sufficient. It has been seen that Mr. Jefferson considered him to have deviated from that line of politics upon which they had formerly united. Mr. Adams' principles of government according to him, though conscientiously, had yet changed. The latter, on the contrary, says of Mr. Jefferson's position and his own, that though by this time he differed with the former in opinion "by the whole horizon concerning the practicability and success of the French Revolution and some other points," yet he had no reason to think that Mr. Jefferson "differed materially from him with regard to the national constitution." These ideas of each other are somewhat at variance. Whether either and which was correct in them, it is not now proposed to enquire; but did Mr. Adams indeed think that the abstract questions of the practicability and success of the French Revolution were the only material subjects of difference between him and Mr. Jefferson? Did he not know when he made this assertion, that his party, at least, differed with that gentleman on other points, and elected him under the supposition that he did also? Could Mr. Adams have really thought that the country was divided on such questions in a hotly

[a] To Cunningham, Letter XXXIV.

contested election, or that the mere personal preference of himself had actuated his supporters? Had he forgotten the great national questions of domestic as well as foreign policy, that had shaken the government to its foundations, and his own votes upon those questions in a divided Senate? Did he consider all the charges of the federalists against their opponents false and groundless? Did those opponents profess no distinctive principles of their own, or support Mr. Jefferson without motive? Mr. Adams' very election contradicted his assertions.

The circumstances under which the letters containing these statements were written, deserve notice. His slumbering resentment had just been aroused by an attack in a federal paper; he determined to throw off the "intolerable load of obloquy and insolence" which had been cast upon him by the federalists; he would do himself the justice which others denied him. There was the debt of vengeance due to Hamilton; there was the long treasured hatred of Pickering; there was the grudge against others whose open disapprobation, or lukewarm support had contributed to his fall. These should be at length satisfied. But had Mr. Adams no feelings of anger against his former political opponents also? Had he forgotten his statement to his friend Cunningham that, as it had since appeared, Mr. Jefferson had countenanced Freneau, Bache, Duane, and Callender at the very time when he was professing great friendship for him? Had he forgotten the memorable sentence written at the close of Jefferson's first Presidency, "I SHUDDER AT THE CALAMITIES I FEAR HIS CONDUCT IS PREPARING FOR HIS COUNTRY; FROM A MEAN THIRST OF POPULARITY, AN INORDINATE AMBITION, AND A WANT OF SINCERITY."[a] Mr. Adams, it must be borne in mind, now stood in a different position with regard to parties. For himself, he had in-

[a] To Cunningham, Letter IV.

deed, nothing to hope or fear, but *his son* had enlisted himself under the banners of democracy, and he could pass over subjects of grievance which had formerly excited his rage, but which it would now mar that son's prospects to revive. It was this son who had vindicated the course of Mr. Jefferson in "his late negotiations with the belligerents;" who had declared in his place in the Senate when the embargo was secretly recommended, "I WOULD NOT CONSIDER, I WOULD NOT DELIBERATE. I WOULD ACT. DOUBTLESS, THE PRESIDENT POSSESSES SUCH FURTHER INFORMATION AS WILL JUSTIFY THE MEASURE." While, therefore, he indulged his revenge to the uttermost against his federal foes, he carefully adapted his confession of political faith to the standard of the day, the creed of Mr. Jefferson. Thus these letters throughout are made to represent Hamilton and himself as the exponents of opposite and opposing systems—the "EBONY AND TOPAZ" of the constitution.

The most exciting topic of present consideration was now the state of the relations with France.

FROM RUFUS KING.

LONDON, Dec. 12, 1796.

Dear Sir,

* * * *

The conclusion of peace may be near, but if so, this desirable event is covered with clouds and darkness, which hide its approach. Neither side is willing to risque the reproach of breaking off the negotiation; though neither side appears to expect that it will terminate the war. That the minister of this country has been able to raise on the terms, and in the manner he has done, the supplies for another year's war, may perhaps appear extraordinary; but I am persuaded that he could have obtained a much larger sum, and that if the negotiation should fail, not through any unreasonable demands of England, but by the French refusing those terms which, on an appeal to the world, may be judged moderate and reasonable, there will not be wanting still further proof of the wealth and pride of this nation. Abercrombie is gone, and General Simcoe is going to the West Indies. I don't find that any considerable reinforcement is going or gone out. The conquest of St. Domingo I apprehend to be relinquished as impracticable; the principal care must be to prevent that communication between the

British Islands and Guadaloupe, and St. Domingo, which will expose the former to the disorders and ruin which are seen in the latter. I have conversed with both Abercrombie and Simcoe, concerning the injuries we have sustained in the West Indies; both spoke with great candor, and avowed a resolution to prevent, so far as should depend on them, a repetition of these injuries. Farewell. Yours very sincerely,

RUFUS KING.

## FROM COL. JOHN TRUMBULL.

London, 15th January, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I wrote to you, on the 8th December, a letter expressive of my opinion as to the probable issue of our negotiation with France, and urging the prudence, and even necessity of an immediate preparation for war. We have just received copies of a message sent by the Directory to the two councils on the fifth instant, in which they propose that a law be passed, *declaring good prize every ship of whatever nation, whose cargo shall be found to consist, either in whole or in part, of articles of the produce or manufacture of Great Britain, or any of her possessions.* Such a law will doubtless pass, and an end is thus put, in my opinion, to all possibility of further negotiation. It remains to say, whether the power and ambition of this extraordinary nation, be as irresistible on the ocean as they have proved on the land. For us no alternative is left; and as we have sought peace with great sincerity and patience, so it is now our duty to defend our rights with the utmost vigor of exertion. The possessions of our enemies in the West Indies are vulnerable; those of their allies, whose own tergiversations on the Mississippi are enough to justify hostilities, are much more so. The question of boundaries ought to be terminated by the immediate seizure of Florida and New Orleans; and since this is the age of revolution, the emancipation of Mexico and South America from the yoke of Spain, and the establishment of a new empire in those countries, ought to be the immediate and great object of our policy. In either or all of these objects, we may rely upon the coöperation of the naval force of this country to any extent, by means of which all communication with the parent state being cut off, the field will remain clear for us, and subject to no opposition but such a feeble one as a weak and disaffected country may be expected to make. God give you union and energy; of force you have enough, if you choose to exert it, and the road is open before you. I am, dear sir, your friend and servant,

JNO. TRUMBULL.

## URIAH TRACY TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, 15th March, 1797.

Sir,

The present state of our political affairs is truly unpleasant. I regret the occasion which obliges me to say, I think our difference with France is not likely

to issue in an amicable settlement. By the best information we now have, Mr. Pinckney is not, and probably will not be received by the Directory. Of course he will return, or if he continues there, it will not be in character of minister. The French continue to take all our commerce almost indiscriminately, and we have reason to apprehend the same treatment from the Spaniards and Dutch.

It is relied upon here that Lord Malmesbury has left France without effecting any one step towards a peace. Official news must soon arrive from Mr. Pinckney or Mr. King, or some one of our foreign ministers. Not one word has been received from any of them since November, excepting one solitary letter from Mr. Adams, at the Hague, which was dated in December, but gave no new information. Arrivals are now daily, and almost hourly expected. The first official news must be important. I very much expect the Senate at least, if not Congress, will be convened; but this step will not be taken at all, until official information shall be received, nor even then, unless it shall be thought absolutely necessary. I hope the official news will render it unnecessary.

I fully trust to your discretion respecting the time of issuing the writ of election, to fill the vacancy in our representation in Congress, made by the resignation of Mr. Swift; nor would I attempt to dictate, but barely to suggest the idea, that Congress *may* be called before their next legal period of convening, in which case it would be a desirable object that our representation should be complete.

My health, though much better, is not yet so confirmed that I dare venture the atmosphere of Litchfield. This is my apology for not writing you more frequently, and for the shortness and incoherence of this. Inclosed is a newspaper that I send you, not that it is a good one, or that it contains news, but because it is a bad one, and shows the depravity of our French faction, of which this paper is very much the central point. Mr. Ellsworth is gaining health, and will be up soon; your connexions are in tolerable health. Mrs. Wolcott is a little out of health, but not so much but she is about house, and will soon be as well as usual. I was yesterday to visit the President, Mr. Adams, who requested me to present his respects to you. I am, sir, with sentiments of respect and esteem, your humble servant,

URIAH TRACY.

## FROM OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

LITCHFIELD, March 20th, 1797.

Sir,

* * * *

Mr. Tracy informs me that credible information, though not official, has been received, that Mr. Pinckney has not been received by the Directory. Whether this is a suspension of an audience till they shall hear from America, or a settled plan to induce the sending of an envoy with powers to rescind the British treaty, and agree to open our ports to them, exclusively and for every purpose; to exclude the commerce of their enemies; confine our trade to themselves and allies; allow French tribunals to be constituted in our country, &c., &c., is yet uncer-

tain, though I am pretty apprehensive that this will be demanded. I will only say, that in no circumstance, in my opinion, a special envoy ought to be sent. This, I perceive the French faction flatter themselves, will be done. I am decided myself that such a step would be far worse than an immediate war. Depredations would continue, universal discontent would take place, the spirit of the people be broken, our sailors scattered into every region; and nothing better would be derived from the measure than voluntary debasement, from which this country could not recover. America is to yield nothing, nor passively to suffer a war. She is to retain all her strength and energy, and put it into the most active operation, and trust to that Providence which has hitherto protected, and, I believe, will protect her. With all our apparent weakness we should have no reason to fear an essential injury, if it was not for the venality and most depraved corruption of our own people. If things shall become truly serious, we shall divide under the names of Federalist and Democrat, and war as we did under those of Whig and Tory, with the same acrimony and I trust, with the same success. The present elections of Virginia, which for years past has been a dead weight upon the Union, will be very interesting at this period.

The French faction are paying the most adulatory addresses to President Adams. This is no compliment to his understanding. The strong predilections, expressed in his speech, for the French, and some other observations, equally unnecessary, they considered as addressed to secure their confidence and regard. Mr. Adams will judge right, if he considers the present calm no other than what precedes an earthquake. He can only contemplate as far as respects himself, whether he will meet a storm which will blow strong from one point or be involved in a tornado, which will throw him into the limbo of vanity. That he has to oppose more severe strokes than as yet it has been attempted to inflict on any one, I am very sure of, in case our affairs continue in their present situation, or shall progress to a greater extreme. We have done the best we could in our election. We have chosen a very honest man, a friend to order and to our national independence and honour; but that you may know that I am not mistaken, I will for once, under a strong seal, venture to tell you that I always considered Mr. Adams a man of great vanity, pretty capricious, of a very moderate share of prudence, and of far less real abilities than he believes he possesses. I therefore sincerely wish he may have able counsellors, in whom he will confide; though, as he will not be influenced but by an apparent compliment to his own understanding, it will require a deal of address to render him the service which it will be essential for him to receive. I wish you may be fortunate enough, and I think you may, to render him this service.

I have read our ministerial correspondence with the French ministers, and I think, in general, it has been well executed, and its publication, at this time, will be highly useful. It exhibits that extreme caution, even to a degree of humiliation, has been observed on our part, not to give offence; and on the part of France, the most insidious Machiavelian policy. One letter of Mr. Jefferson to Mr. Pinckney at London, bears, in my opinion, the stamp of the most extreme folly. He urges him to represent to the British minister that their spoliations of our commerce to France, would give them [the French] just grounds of complaint

that we did not observe the laws of neutrality, a principle the most absurd, but which the French avail themselves of. And what if this conduct did expose us to the resentment of France? Would a British minister consider it otherwise than a fortunate circumstance?

I am much pleased with the high respect with which President Washington has been treated. It was due to his merit, and will instruct the French and their partisans in how high estimation his administration has been held.

I am issuing a writ to elect a representative in the room of Mr. Swift. The propriety of this mode of resigning is pretty questionable, but it has been practised. My most affectionate regard to your wife and children, whom, with yourself, I wish to see here the next May, and with devout wishes for your happiness,

I am, &c.,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

## FROM FISHER AMES.

DEDHAM, March 24, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

After many perils, by wind and water, mud and ice, after crossing Stratford ferry in a snow storm, and walking on the ice over Connecticut river, I am by my own fireside. The great theme of every man's inquiries is, are we going to war with France. This is dreaded as it ought to be, and after that, it is still dreaded as it ought not to be; for I think I discover a preference of peace to honour and real independence. France is feared as if her cut-throats could fraternize us, and loved by the multitude as if they were not cut-throats. I cannot but lament that the public sentiment receives no good impression from the legislature, and no sufficiently strong one from the government. The Jacobins had the people so long that they filled all the weak heads, and they are such as arguments from books they do not read, and from men whose conversation and company they do not enjoy, cannot reach. The national spirit is yet lower, and popular error more inveterate, in my calculations, than in those of my friends. I fear little from this, if Congress should be disposed and really obliged, by circumstances, to assume a strong position for the country. But before Congress meets there will be room for opinion to fix itself, instead of being fixed, as it ought to be, by those at the head of affairs. I forbear to go into any detail of my sentiments on this subject, and the more, as I am much shaken in my adherence to them by yours. I hope Sumner will be chosen Governor, and the prospect is believed to be good. Sullivan is his competitor.

Wishing your rewards of public approbation, and health and happiness may be equal to your services, and that you may not be discouraged in your endeavours to keep this generation of vipers from ruining us, I am, dear sir, truly yours, &c.,

FISHER AMES.

## URIAH TRACY TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, 26 March, 1797.

Sir,

I have a moment's notice only of the conveyance for this by Mr. Holbrook, who says he shall be in Litchfield on Thursday or Friday of this week. I have to inform you that the government is convened by the President. Both Houses of Congress are to meet on the 15th May, in this city. The unparalleled treatment we receive from France, both as respects our commerce, and in the person of our ambassador, Mr. Pinckney, has occasioned this step. You will have seen, before you receive this, a newspaper account of Mr. Pinckney's treatment by the French Directory, which will give a tolerably accurate statement of the information contained in his official despatches to the Executive. M. Adet has taken a ship for transporting him to France, but he has set the 25th April for his departure. I conclude from this he expects some further news, and possibly different orders. You will recollect from their last constitution, the French are to choose a third of their government in this month. I see by the last accounts they are collecting a great military force to superintend order and support liberty at the election. Much will depend on their choice; the spirit of the nation will show itself either in the freedom of it, or in submitting to the will of the men in power through the medium of the military. A huge effort will undoubtedly be made to compose this one-third of revolutionary men, for the purpose of destroying the constitution of '95, and restoring a former one of '93—another effort to bring in royalists, who will wish to reinstate that of '89. What will be produced, time alone can decide; but unless an alteration, either of men or measures, or both, takes place in France, we must have war with them—our own French partisans being so much worse than the French themselves, that I fear more from them than I do from the crazy Directory, if they [the latter] could act uninfluenced.

Mr. Holbrook is waiting, and I must close my letter with adding only that I am in better health, though not perfectly restored. I am, sir, with much respect and consideration, your very humble servant,

URIAH TRACY.

## FROM JEREMIAH WADSWORTH.

Hartford, March 26th, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I have your favour of the 16th with the papers I wanted, for which I thank you. I am for rejecting the cup of humiliation offered us by the terrible republic at any rate, and I am confident the country will be tolerably unanimous on this sentiment, but I fear the government will not be firm. I consider our Legislature is composed of very discordant materials. Our Executive I do not like to describe, as I try to hope I am mistaken in my opinion of it; but I confess I do not see how they will be able to conduct the political ship. There are some things in the public speeches, which have been to me a little alarming, and I fear a French influence will predominate. The late House of Representatives,

if I am not greatly mistaken, were not composed of solid materials; the change will not very materially better them. The present one I suppose will be soon called, or rather fear it. There is a general opinion in this state that France intends war, and I believe war is better than our present state. We are all well except colds, which now are pretty general here. The family join me in every good wish. I am, dear sir, sincerely your friend,

JAS. WADSWORTH.

If you have any news from Mr. Pinckney, pray let us have it.

Subsequent to the news of Mr. Pinckney's non-reception by the Directory, arrived that of his actual expulsion from the territories of France.

Had there been the slightest disposition on the part of France to come to a just and fair settlement of her difficulties with America, the mission of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney afforded a most favorable opportunity. He was, in the words of Mr. Adams, "a character whose integrity, talents, experience, and services placed him in the rank of the most esteemed and respected in the nation."[a] His letters of credence and his instructions expressed the sincere desire of the government to restore the former friendship of the two countries, and his conduct, characterized by temper and forbearance, manifested his own earnest wish to fulfil that object. But to meet the overtures of the United States was no part of the design of the Directory. Flushed with new victories in Europe, depending upon the assistance of a designing faction in America; reaping rich profit from the plunder of our commerce and stimulated by the desire of wounding England through the destruction of all neutral trade; a settlement of disputes on any basis but that of union in the war, would have involved too great a sacrifice of advantage. Toward Mr. Pinckney their conduct had been characterized by duplicity and delay. There was no intention of bringing matters permanently to a crisis. The circum-

[a] Message to Congress, May 16th, 1797.

stances following his arrival cannot be more concisely stated than was done by the President himself.

Mr. Pinckney reached the capitol on the 5th December.

"A few days before his arrival at Paris, the French Minister of Foreign Relations informed the American Minister, then resident at Paris, of the formalities to be observed by himself in taking leave and by his successor preparatory to his reception. These formalities they observed, and on the ninth of December presented officially to the Minister of Foreign Relations, the one a copy of his letters of recall, the other a copy of his letters of credence.

"These were laid before the Executive Directory. Two days afterwards the Minister of Foreign Relations informed the recalled American Minister that the Executive Directory had determined not to receive another Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States until after the redress of grievances demanded of the American government, and which the French Republic had a right to expect from it. The American Minister immediately endeavoured to ascertain whether by refusing to receive him, it was intended that he should retire from the territories of the French Republic, and verbal answers were given that such was the intention of the Directory. For his own justification he desired a written answer, but obtained none until towards the last of January, when receiving notice in writing to quit the territories of the republic, he proceeded to Amsterdam, where he proposed to wait for instructions from this government. During his residence at Paris, cards of hospitality were refused him and he was threatened with being subjected to the jurisdiction of the minister of police, but with becoming firmness he insisted on the protection of the law of nations due to him as the known minister of a foreign power."[a]

In contrast with Mr. Pinckney's reception, was Mr. Monroe's public audience of leave. The President of the Directory, in an answer to his address, exhibited the mixture of insolence and chicanery, characteristic of its policy.

"France, (he said) rich in her liberty, surrounded by a train of victories, strong in the esteem of her allies, will not abase herself by calculating the consequences of the condescension of the American government, to the suggestions of her former tyrants. Moreover, the French republic hoped that the successors of Columbus, of Raleigh, and of Penn, proud of their liberty, will never forget *that they owe it to France.* They will weigh in their wisdom, the magnanimous benevolence of the French people with the crafty caresses of certain perfidious persons who meditate bringing them back to their former slavery. Assure the good American people, sir, that like them we adore liberty; that they will always have our esteem, and that they will find in the French people republican generosity,

[a] Message to Congress, May 16th, 1797.

which knows how to grant peace, as it does to cause its sovereignty to be respected.

As to you, Mr. Minister Plenipotentiary, you have combated for principles—you have known the true interests of our country—depart with our regret. In you we give up a representative to America, and retain the remembrance of the citizen whose personal qualities did honour to that title."

This treatment of Mr. Pinckney; the manifest determination of France to persist in her aggressions; the continued and increasing plunder of our trade; the symptoms of difficulties with other European powers and upon the frontiers; rendered advisable a speedy meeting of Congress. On the 25th of March, therefore, the President issued his proclamation, convening that body on the 15th of May.

The following letters, written in the interim, indicate the course of conduct recommended by different members of the party. It is worth noticing, that without a single exception, among those whom Mr. Adams already began to consider as his enemies, the most cordial intention is expressed to facilitate his successful administration; and that prominent among them, stands Mr. Hamilton.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILA. March 29th, 1797.

It is now known that General Pinckney has not been admitted by the Directory, and that the refusal has been attended with circumstances of indignity. In addition to the facts detailed in a letter from Paris, dated January 7th, which has been published in the papers, there is one which ought to be known.

M. De La Croix, in a letter to Mr. Monroe, announced it to be the determination of the Directory not to receive another Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States until the complaints of France have been redressed. The grievances, of which a redress must be preliminary to the reception of a minister, or any discussion, are supposed to be those stated by M. Adet, to which the government has given an answer, by which they must and will abide. The violation of the treaty with Great Britain, the repeal of laws, and the admission of a consular jurisdiction paramount to the courts of our country, are points never to be conceded.

It is also a fact that Mr. Pinckney was especially instructed on every point relative to which any complaint exists; and his letter of credence, of which a

copy has been delivered, stated that the President, "sincerely desirous to maintain that good understanding which, from the commencement of their alliance, has subsisted between the two nations, and to efface unfavourable impressions, banish suspicions and restore cordiality which was at once the evidence and pledge of a friendly union, had judged it expedient to appoint, &c." The rank with which Gen. Pinckney was invested, was equal to that enjoyed by Mr. Jay; and his letter of credence designated him to be a special messenger of conciliation. I have mentioned these facts because the malcontents will endeavour to prevent the adoption of any defensive measures until an Envoy Extraordinary can be sent, and the issue of his mission known, and because the friends of government, having been the advocates for negotiation on a former occasion, may be embarrassed by the specious appearance of a parallel case. The truth is, Gen. Pinckney is in fact an Envoy Extraordinary, special objects being designated in his commission, and though he is styled a Minister Plenipotentiary, yet this is a grade precisely equal to that of Envoy Extraordinary. No pretence against his reception can be urged therefore either from a defect of powers, or a want of attention on our part to etiquette.

The system under which the French act with respect to us has been a complicated one. They meant to influence the election of President by the terror of war, to which they know we are averse; if this scheme failed, they knew the administration would be embarrassed. They consider the country as nearly equally divided, and by supporting their faction they hope to govern our counsels; they aim at wounding Great Britain by destroying our commerce, which they consider as a principal aliment of British credit, and this with their general wish for plunder, has determined them to suffer no discussion; thereby preventing the trouble and chagrin of hearing our complaints.

It is contrary to the general system of France that we should longer remain neutral, and no commercial nation will be permitted to be so. We must join France in the war, or defend ourselves against her depredations.

The Directory expect that the people will not support the government. If they separate on this occasion, our country is undone. In my opinion, we must prepare for a serious state of things; one which will continue for a considerable time, and to meet which successfully, firmness and system are indispensable. We must suffer our merchants to arm for defence; we must fortify some of our ports; we must equip some ships of war to serve as convoys; we must embody a force to prevent an insurrection of the slaves; we must lay a tax, and we must keep a minister as near the terrible republic as the Directory will suffer him to remain, to profit by any opportunities for settling our disputes. One thing we must not do; we must not retract any thing which has been said or done. The *opposite* plan will be to do nothing but send a new minister, and one of the French party. In the meantime, our commerce will languish, public credit will fail, despondency, distress, and faction will impair and divide our country; and the French faction will obtain an ascendancy. It appears to me necessary that the country should be roused, not influenced; that the people should make up their minds for a serious and persevering exertion; some sacrifices must be made, but if the people do not support the government and reject the distinction between them which the Directory is attempting to establish, all is lost.

In reference to the following to and from Mr. Hamilton, it requires to be stated that the proposition to appoint a commission of three, of which Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Madison should be one, had been suggested to the President by Mr. Hamilton himself, through the medium of Senator Tracy. Mr. Hamilton thus mentions the fact.

"After the rejection of Mr. Pinckney by the government of France, immediately after the instalment of Mr. Adams as President, and long before the measure was taken, I urged a member of Congress, then high in the confidence of the President, to propose to him the immediate appointment of three commissioners, of whom Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Madison to be one, to make another attempt to negotiate." [a]

Mr. Adams in commenting upon this, says:

"I will relate all that I can recollect relative to this subject. Mr. Tracy of Connecticut, who indeed was always in my confidence, came to me, I believe at the opening of the special session of Congress which I called soon after my inauguration, and produced a long, elaborate letter from Mr. Hamilton, containing a whole system of instruction for the conduct of the President, the Senate and the House of Representatives. I read it very deliberately, and really thought the man was in a delirium. It appeared to me a very extraordinary instance of volunteer empiricism thus to prescribe for a President, Senate and House of Representatives, all desperately sick and in a state of deplorable debility, without being called. And when I maturely considered the contents of the letter, my surprize was increased. I despised and detested the letter too much to take a copy of it, which I now regret. This letter is still in being, and I doubt not many copies of it are extant. I most earnestly request any gentleman who possesses one to publish it. That letter, though it had no influence with me, had so much with both Houses of Congress, as to lay the foundation of the overthrow of the federal party, and of the revolution that followed four years afterwards. I will endeavour to recollect as much of the contents of it as I can, and if I am incorrect in any point, those who possess the letter can, by the publication of it, easily set all right." [b]

Mr. Adams accordingly goes on to recapitulate the contents of the letter from a memory most apparently defective, as recommendations are referred to, which could not have been made, and measures spoken of which were not

[a] "Letter concerning the public conduct and character of John Adams, Esq., President of the United States." New York, 1800. p. 47.

[b] Boston Patriot, Letter XIII.

adopted until a year after. What the letter was, is not known, but its real contents will doubtless be shown from an authentic source and in due time. Mr. Adams proceeds:

"How it happened that Mr. Hamilton's contemplations coincided so exactly with mine, as to think of Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Madison for envoy to France, it may be more difficult to explain. But let it be considered that this letter was written long after my conversation with Mr. Jefferson, concerning himself and Mr. Madison, which was the morning after my inauguration; that I had communicated that conversation to one or more of the heads of departments the same morning. It is probable that Mr. Hamilton received hints from some of his correspondents, that I had thought of Madison and Hamilton, and that he was not displeased with the idea."

In reference to the time when Mr. Hamilton's views were made known to the President, the former states that it was *immediately* after the inauguration; the latter that the letter was written long after the conversation with Mr. Jefferson. The following letters show conclusively, that Mr. Hamilton as usual, was right. The matter is of little consequence, except as showing the habitual inaccuracy of Mr. Adams, and because he has made it the basis of a paltry insinuation against Mr. Hamilton's "correspondents." It appears that one alone of the Cabinet, knew of the President's determination; and it will be seen from Wolcott's letter of March 30th to Mr. Hamilton, that that one had never communicated it. Why the recommendation by Mr. Hamilton, of a measure in consonance with Mr. Adams' own views, provoked this display of impotent malignity, those who have fathomed his character can determine.

FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

[NEW YORK] March 30, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

Every one who can properly appreciate the situation of our affairs at this moment, in all the extent of possible circumstances, must be extremely anxious for a course of conduct in our government which will unite the utmost prudence

with energy. It has been a considerable time my wish that a commission extraordinary [a] should be constituted to go to France, to *explain, demand, negotiate,* &c. I was particularly anxious that the first measure of the present President's administration should have been that, but it has not happened. I now continue to wish earnestly that the same measure may go into effect, and that the meeting of the Senate may be accelerated for that purpose. Without opening a new channel of negotiation, it seems to me the door of accommodation is shut, and rupture will follow, if not prevented by a general peace. Who, indeed, can be certain that a general pacification of Europe may not leave us alone to receive the law from France? Will it be wise to omit any thing to parry, if possible, these great risks? Perhaps the Directory have declared that they will not receive a minister till their grievances shall have been redressed! This can hardly mean more than that they will not receive a residing minister. It cannot mean that they will not hear an extraordinary messenger, who may even be sent to know what will satisfy. Suppose they do. It will still be well to convince the people that the government has done all in its power, and that the Directory are unreasonable.

But the enemies of the government call for the measure. To me this is a very strong reason for pursuing it. It will meet them on their own ground, and disarm them of the plea that something has been omitted.

I ought, my good friend, to apprise you, for you may learn it from no other, that a suspicion begins to dawn among the friends of the government that the actual administration (ministers) is not averse from war with France. How very important to obviate this.

The accounts just received offer a great danger that the emperor may be compelled to make peace. Paul of Russia is evidently lukewarm in the cause of the allies. From lukewarmness to enmity, where fortune takes the other side, is but a step. If England is left to bear the burden alone, who can say France may not venture to *sport* an army to this country. It may get rid of troublesome spirits. As in the case of England, so now, my opinion is to exhaust the expedient of negotiation, and at the same time to prepare vigorously for the worst. This is sound policy. Any omission or deficiency either way, will be a great error. God bless you!

A. HAMILTON.

## TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

PHILA. March 31, 1797.

I have received your letter of March 30th, and I consider it as a valuable acquisition. It developes the origin of a transaction which came to my knowledge at the close of the last session, which filled my mind with inexpressible surprise. To you I will say, but in the most perfect confidence, that the President had determined on instituting a commission, though it would not have been composed of the persons you have proposed. I believe no one of the heads of departments

[a] In the margin is written, "Madison, Pinckney, Cabot."

was acquainted with the decision, except myself. I had attributed it to Mr. Ames, from a casual expression of his, and I own that by means of my most sincere and urgent expostulations—nay, supplications, it was postponed.

I am far from believing that considering General Pinckney's diplomatic rank, his personal character, and the special objects of his mission, which were specified in his letters of credence, and communicated to the Directory, there is any just or even specious pretext for not receiving him. On the contrary, it appears to me that France has insolently rejected a fair and suitable proposition for a discussion and adjustment of the existing disputes; that the national indignity is such that it must be noticed. There is a point (but where I allow to be uncertain) below which the government cannot stop without losing the confidence of the people, and producing that despondency, loss of credit, and want of public concert which would ruin our affairs. I wish we may find that our apathy has not been already carried to a fatal extent.

The plan of measures I would propose, is as follows:

1st. That the President should in his speech to Congress take a view of the complaints of France, and of the measures adopted by his predecessor, particularly in the mission of General Pinckney, and should give them his decided approbation. That he should intimate, but in decided terms, that France has rejected a suitable opportunity for discussion, but that this would not prevent him from persevering in the line of negotiation; that measures would be accordingly perseveringly pursued for renewing proposals and entering upon negotiations with France, whenever the concurrence of that government shall be manifested.

2d. That the President should recommend, and in more than usual terms of confidence, the adoption of the following measures. 1st. An increase of revenue. 2d. The arming our vessels for defence, with the right of capturing the attacking force. 3d. The equipment of a certain number of stout merchant ships to prove as guards to our coasts, and convoys for our trade. 4th. The fortification of our ports. 5th. The enrollment of a land force, *principally with a view to the suppression of any insurrection of the slaves in the southern States.* 6th. A discretionary and summary authority to arrest vessels suspected of being designed as cruisers upon our trade, or that of nations with whom we are at peace.

3d. A serious and firm call upon Congress for their united and vigorous support of the Executive, with an appeal to the honour, generosity, and patriotism of the people, in the present critical state of affairs.

My own ideas of the system and intentions of France would lead me further in defensive and cautionary measures than I have proposed; but I am sensible of the impolicy of anticipating public opinion. On the subject of negotiation, I would ever be ready to meet France, and would keep an agent, or if you please, agents in Europe ready for that purpose;[a] but I am not willing to admit that the government has already done less than the occasion required, or that France is justifiable in refusing to recognize Mr. Pinckney. I am also free to declare that I conceive the claims of France to be in any other than the last and most extreme necessity, utterly indefensible. They in fact require a surrender of national independence. I would propose to retract nothing.

[a] *Note.* "I would not refuse a modification of treaties if desired."

The idea of a commission consisting of Mr. Madison, or any one like him, I must own to you, is one which I can never adopt without the utmost reluctance. I have no confidence in Mr. Madison; he has been a frequenter of Adet's political parties. I have been just informed that M. Adet has suggested the idea of sending this gentleman. We know that the French count upon the support of a party in this country, and so shameless is the faction grown, that positive proof of a devotion to French views, is with many, no injury to a man's popularity. If the government suffers France to dictate what description of men shall be appointed to foreign courts, our country is undone. From that moment the confidence of all the old-fashioned, honourable and virtuous men of the interior country is irrevocably lost.

Another consequence of not rejecting the interference of France is, that it will encourage other nations to interfere, especially Great Britain, and will moreover countenance the calumny, that a British faction exists. The French say that Mr. Jay and his friends were in the British interest, and that therefore he was appointed. Can it be safe to appoint a man known to be of the French party, and thus to give to a calumny the force of an argument?

I have no objection to sending a man of neutral politics, if he is a man of sincere firmness and integrity. General Pinckney is of this description. If a commission of them is generally preferred, it is a point perhaps not to be contested; but how can the commission be composed? From what was on the point of being done, I presume Mr. Cabot cannot be brought forward. If a man of his principles were to be associated with Mr. Madison, either nothing would be done, or something worse than nothing. Mr. Madison would insist upon a submission to France, or would obstruct a settlement, and throw the disgrace of failure on the friends of government.

Either result would deliver the country, bound hand and foot, to French influence. If nothing was done, the obstinacy of the federalists would be complained of. If something was done, however humiliating, the responsibility would be divided, and all the mischief would be attributed to the desperate state of affairs, induced by the *fatal treaty* with Great Britain.

The present is a moment of apparent tranquillity; but I conjecture that it is a calm which forebodes a hurricane. The Executive will either find a violent and steady gale from one point, or be assailed with a tornado which will throw every thing into confusion. I predict that no treaty, no compromise, no concession will afford security. Revenue is essential, and there will, I fear, be insuperable objections started by the friends and enemies of government. Credit has been abused—has been exhausted in senseless speculations.

You know that I am accustomed to respect your opinions; and at any rate I am not so ignorant of the extent of your influence with the friends of government, as not to be sensible that if you are known to favour the sending a commission, either nothing will be done or your opinion will prevail. In this case, what will be the objection against sending Mr. Ingersoll of this city, or some such character, to be united with Gen. Pinckney and John Q. Adams, or with Mr. Murray, to rendezvous at Amsterdam, until the consent of France to renew negotiations

can be obtained. Is a direct mission to France, of which Mr. Madison is to be a member, in your view indispensable?

I should be sorry if the friends of the government were to consider me, or any of the public officers, as desirous of producing a war with France, because I should consider this as evidence that our affairs are desperate. If the public pulse does not beat higher than that of government, all is over. So far as individual characters are affected, public opinion is of no consequence; but the public opinion with regard to measures, is of the utmost importance. There ought to be a zeal for strenuous measures, and this zeal ought to be an engine in the hands of the Executive for preserving peace. I think I can assure you that the movements of our political machine cannot be adjusted to a minute scale, and that if the direction is attempted to be varied, its future course will be nearly opposite to the present.

Our finances will be hereafter difficult to manage, owing to the profligate abuse of private credit. The reluctance of the eastern gentlemen to direct taxes, will, I suspect, relax the tone of our measures; the consequences will be, I fear, a humiliating settlement with France, ruin of commerce and credit, and the establishment of foreign factions in our country. Though the Executive will not be blameable, it will be blamed for these evils. Having no ambition to gratify, no theory or project to support, I shall be ready to serve my country with my best exertions, and shall be happy to receive your opinions and to know the state of public opinion. No person can exceed me in sincere wishes that what is proper may be done.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

Brookline, April 3d, 1797.

Dear Sir,

Your favour of the 16th ultimo, and its accompaniment, were received yesterday. Whether the government will have virtue enough to profit by your labours or not, time only will show; but we, the people, are certainly much the wiser, and as one of them, I thank you for the instruction. I foresaw at an early period, that if the federalists were faithful to the country, their conduct would be liable to misrepresentation; and considering the sort of stuff men are made of, I confess my apprehensions have been very great that some of the best characters in the nation would be looked upon with jealousy. Although I took no part in the election, I do not hesitate to avow my opinion that the first and highest duty of the electors was, to prevent the election of the French President, and this being provided, the next object would have been to secure the election of Mr. Adams. But I will never admit that we ought to take any considerable risque of seeing a French, or any foreign President, rather than the risque of any one federal candidate in preference to another; but one misfortune is, that when we profess to set the interests of the public above that of our friends, their pride forbids them to believe it, or egotism to forgive it. I have not the privilege of a democrat, and therefore cannot answer your questions for the people; but for myself, I can readily say, that the United States are manifestly in the right, and therefore cannot confess they are in the wrong; of consequence they can neither

repeal the acts of their legislature, nor reverse the just judgments of their courts, nor violate their engagements to another nation. But you would know what the people will think. I presume if the government assumes the tone it ought, that the people will accord with them; and if the government does not, I should expect the people will blame them hereafter, when they shall have experienced in addition to their losses of property, the more irreparable loss of honour. Such is my course of thinking, when, abstracted from the world, I revolve the subject in my mind; but I ought to add, that whenever I go out of my own house, or have guests within it, I am led to distrust my reasonings and conclusions. I find myself in the errours of the French revolutionists, who maintain that the people understand their true interests, and will always vindicate them. How this may be in the political millennium I know not; but in the present state of society, folly and the vices which are its natural offspring, have a power which cannot be overcome. After all, we must take the world as it is, and by expecting less, expose ourselves to less chagrin. I have long seen that your sensibility was deeply wounded by the want of interest in the affairs of the nation, which is discovered by many *public* men; but I hope you will not always be a prey to that sort of anxiety; and if you cannot arrive at a pure apathy, I hope you will at least moderate your sufferings, for I am sure the consciousness of what you have done, ought to satisfy pride as well as principle; and if there is to be public disgrace, no part of it will attach to you.

G. C.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

[New York] April 5, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter of March 31st. I hope nothing in my last was misunderstood. Could it be necessary, I would assure you that no one has a stronger conviction than myself, of the purity of the motives which direct your public conduct, or of the good sense and judgment by which it is guided. If I have a fear, (you will excuse my frankness) it is, lest the strength of your feelings, the companion of energy of character, should prevent that pliancy to circumstances which is sometimes indispensable. I beg you only to watch yourself on this score, and the public will always find in you an able, as well as faithful servant.

The situation of our country, my dear sir, is singularly critical. The map of Europe is every way discouraging. There is too much reason to apprehend that the Emperor of Germany, in danger from Russia and Prussia, [and] perhaps [from] the Porte as well as France, may be compelled to yield to the views of the latter. England standing alone, may be driven to a similar office. It is certain that great consternation in court and country, attends the intelligence of Buonaparte's last victories. Either to be in rupture with France, united with England alone, or singly, as is possible, would be a most unwelcome situation. Divided as we are, who can say what would be hazarded by it? In such a situation, it appears to me we should rather err on the side of condescension, than on the opposite

side. We ought to do every thing to avoid rupture without unworthy sacrifices, and to keep in view, as a primary object, union at home. No measure can tend more to this than an extraordinary mission. And it is certain, to fulfil these ends proposed, it ought to embrace a character in whom France and the opposition have full credit. What risk can attend sending Madison, if combined as I propose, with Pinckney and Cabot? or such a man (*two deciding*)? Depend on it, Pinckney is a man of honour and loves his country. Cabot, we both know. Besides, there ought to be certain leading instructions from which they may not deviate. I agree with you, that we have nothing to retract; that we ought to risk every thing before we submit to any dishonourable terms. But we may re-mould our treaties. We may agree to put France on the same footing as Great Britain by our treaty with her. We may also liquidate with a view to *future* wars, the import of the mutual guarantee in the treaty of alliance, substituting specific succors and defining the *casus fœderis*. But this last may or may not be done, though with me it is a favourite object. Ingersoll will not fulfil the object, but I had rather have him than do nothing.

I am clearly of opinion that the President shall come forward to Congress in a manly tone, and that Congress shall adopt vigorous defensive measures. Those which you propose are proper, and some others on which I may write hereafter.

If Madison is well coupled, I do not think his intrigues can operate as you imagine. Should he advocate dishonourable concessions to France, the public opinion will not support [him]. His colleagues, by address and showing a disposition to do enough, may easily defeat his policy, and maintain the public confidence. Besides that, it is possible that too much may be taken for granted with regard to Mr. Madison. Yours truly,

A. HAMILTON.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

Brookline, April 7, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

It gives me infinite pleasure to learn from you that our Palinurus is undaunted at the storm which is gathering. Popular gales sometimes blow hard, but they don't blow long; and the man who has the courage to face them, will at last *out*face them. I hope from my soul, that the President will enjoy that immortality which is due to the man who dares to do right, when all the world does wrong. I believe, however, if he is sternly and strongly right, a great many people will discover that they themselves are so.

I readily accept the apostleship you mention, and shall use your discourse as if it were my own. Your letter arrived yesterday afternoon, and already my zeal has produced a letter of two sheets, which will be transcribed as a circular to half a dozen friends. I shall quote no authorities to infidels, and as for the faithful—they won't need them. Our best prayers are for blessings on Mrs. Wolcott and the little ones. I am as ever, your affectionate and faithful,

G. CABOT.

## FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

[New York] April 13th, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

The post of to-day brought me a letter from you. I am just informed that an order is come to the Custom House not to clear out any vessels if armed, unless destined for the East Indies. Under the present circumstances, I very much doubt the expediency of this measure. The excesses of France justify passiveness in the government; and its inability to protect the merchants, requires that it should leave them to protect themselves. Nor do I fear that it would tend to rupture with France, if such be not her determination otherwise. The legality of this prohibition cannot be defended. It must stand on its necessity. It would, I think, have been enough to require security that the vessel is not to be employed to cruise against any of the belligerent powers. Perhaps even now, where vessels have been armed previous to the receipt of the prohibition, it is safe and advisable to except them on the condition of such security. Think of this promptly. The general measure may be further considered at leisure. Nor am I am prepared to say that, having *been taken*, it ought to be revoked.

I will send you, shortly, some remarks in reply to questions you propose. Adieu. Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

Brookline, April 13, 1797.

Dear Sir,

It has been my intention to communicate to you two occurrences of the last summer, which seemed to be of consequence to be known to those whose opinion must guide our affairs. The first is the substance of a conversation with the Duke de Liancourt,[a] in which he disclosed to me the determination of the French Directory, to order the seizure of all vessels that should be found to have on board any articles of the product or manufacture of any of the British dominions; and all such products and manufactures to be condemned, wheresoever from, whithersoever bound, and to whomsoever belonging. Whether the vessel was to be condemned or not, he did not clearly express. He assured me of the authenticity of his information, and that the system would be carried into operation "as soon as the Emperor should be broke down;" which he said would be in September or October. After a moment's pause, I observed that I did not at all doubt the truth of his information, and that my mind was ready to receive much more. He perceived that my gravity and moderation were affected, and suddenly added, "What! you think this would be unjust?" I think, said I, it would be very impolitic, because it would confirm all those charges of tyranny, injustice, and contempt for the rights of others, which are made against France by the wise and virtuous part of mankind. It would be, in fact, a greater out-

[a] *Note.* "I think this conversation was in the month of August, and it would be easy to ascertain the day."

rage upon neutral rights than was ever committed. Why, said he, it may be disagreeable, "but there is no other way of destroying England." I acknowledged to him, in a spirit of irony, that if the English could be destroyed in no other way, that would justify it; but I added, that my own opinion was, that such a measure would unite the English to a man, and excite the most desperate spirit in the nation; that they would cover the sea with their ships, and by the greatness of their exertion, would annihilate the remaining navy of their enemies, and would block up for nine months in the year every port of France on the Atlantic. He smiled at my opinions, and said the power of England was at an end. Her resources were exhausted, and she could not add a single ship, nor find the means of supporting her present navy another season. I rejoined, that all the civilized world would have cause to mourn, if this should be true, for they would then be obliged to fight against France or give up their independence.

The other occurrence was an unexpected visit from Cutting, who asked me without much ceremony, "who we intended to make President?" I told him I had nothing to do with it, but the friends of the government would certainly make Mr. Adams, if they could; or if they could not elect him without a hazard of Mr. Jefferson's coming in, they would perhaps make Mr. Pinckney; for they deemed it essential to the safety of the country to exclude Mr. Jefferson, and if possible to choose Mr. Adams. He affected great surprise at these sentiments, and assured me that, if I went into the world, instead of remaining in solitude, I should find a total change of sentiments among the federalists, which had recently taken place; that whatever they might think of the tendency of the French revolution to serve or injure the cause of freedom, they were all united in their estimate of the French power, and of the use that would be made of it; and that they saw plainly "WE MUST SOOTH FRANCE BY MAKING THEIR FAVOURITE, JEFFERSON, PRESIDENT, OR WE MUST TAKE A WAR WITH THEM." "This language," said I to Mr. Cutting, "is what I should have expected from you and your party; but if the alternation is made, I trust there is virtue in the country to make a war against tyrants, rather than tamely submit to them as masters." He said he was very sorry I thought him a party man, &c. &c., and then asked me if I had seen the paper of the day. I told him, no. Oh! said he, the contest is nearly over; Buonaparte has cut up all the Austrians, and there will be no further opposition in Italy. He then repeated his regret at my tenacity, and assured me that Col. Hamilton had declared to him, that Mr. Jefferson must be supported, as the only way of appeasing France. I told him Col. Hamilton's opinion would have weight with me on every such subject; but he was frequently misrepresented for party purposes, and nothing short of hearing it from his own mouth would make me believe he was willing to see Mr. Jefferson President. All this respecting Hamilton, I am persuaded is false; but the extreme desire discovered by Mr. Cutting, to draw from me a sentiment of acquiescence in Mr. Jefferson's election, for the sake of pacifying France, is unaccountable.

I give you the essence of what passed, leaving out many little circumstances which would be tedious to recite. It was my expectation to pass a night with Mr. Adams in November, when I should have related every thing to him; but

my indolence conquers every thing, and I staid at home, where I have radicated too strongly to be easily removed.

I will write you again in a few days, when I may possibly send you a copy of a letter which I have addressed to a few friends confidentially, assuring them that the government would be firm; and showing them the necessity of exciting the people to support the measures which shall be adopted. Your faithful friend,

GEORGE CABOT.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

Brookline, April 17, 1797.

My Dear Friend,

Jere. Smith, who called on me yesterday, tells me that a difference of sentiment prevails in and *out* of the cabinet respecting the expediency of a new embassy to France. From the facts which have been stated to me, I don't see how we can possibly send new messengers with the expectation that they will not be kicked from the door, unless we first appease those to whom the visit is intended by performing the penance they have prescribed; and this, all agree is impossible for us to do.

I confess to you I was struck with the formal precision of the words used by the Directory. The literal sense of the declaration would be saved, though they were to receive an embassy from us, if it were other than a minister plenipo.; but why this equivocation? Surely it was to leave the door open for accommodation, if the actual state of things should render it desirable for them. If they have not acted upon some such principle, the new embassy would be fruitless; and if they have, it is unnecessary, because in the latter case they will be guided in their conduct towards us by events in Europe, and the circumstances of their own country. But I take it for granted, the only solid argument in favour of a new embassy, is the tendency of it to satisfy popular opinion here, and to unite the country in the measures which must be taken after ill success. I am afraid this argument claims more weight than it truly merits. I conceive that the government has attempted negotiation already as far as it can without abasement; and if the knowledge of this does not satisfy the country, it is not certain that anything that can be done will satisfy them. But my fears concerning the effects of a new embassy are, that France will strengthen the party by it. She will know our motive to be to put her so clearly in the wrong, that her friends here can no longer be her advocates: but as she must know this, she can with certainty counteract us, and by a very obvious policy give to her friends new strength. She can propose to the new embassy a treaty which shall contain many things which would be extremely popular, accompanied with some requisitions which we could not grant without present dishonour, and ultimately a war with another nation. The commissioners would reject such a proposition if they are honest, but the party in this country would then be able to rally again.

France is now grown, and daily growing more odious to the people. But from a thousand causes this weaning from folly is a difficult work, and I incline to think France would now gladly prevent its being perfected. If therefore, as ac-

cording to my ideas, the result of a new embassy may be to supply new means to the French party, now exhausted; the danger of this may be a fair offset against the hope of uniting the country in some efficient mode of defence. At the same time I express these as my opinions, it is impossible that the mass of the people should not (if left to themselves) prefer one more attempt to persuade our French brethren to do justice and be friends. Public attention is pretty well excited in this quarter, and hitherto the public mind has held a right course. I should imagine by the time Congress meets, we shall be willing to take such burdens as may be reasonable to lay upon us. I think, however, much will depend upon the tone of the government; if it is masculine, our notes will conform. I hope the President will speak decidedly upon every topic that is connected with the business of the meeting, and especially if it is clear that we cannot and ought not to attempt further negotiation, I hope he will say it. Yours, faithfully,

G. CABOT.

## GEORGE CABOT TO JEREMIAH SMITH.

Brookline, April 17, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

It is easy to say what ought *not* to be done in certain contingencies, but difficult to determine what *ought*. The truth is, that we often arrive at a dilemma in which something must be done, and yet that something must appear to be wrong; for the inconveniences of the course taken, whatever it be, must be considerable, and will be the most known and the only ones felt; but no considerations of this kind will deter many men, whom I am proud to call friends, from adopting any measures which in their judgment the public good may require. But what are the measures, you ask? I wish I could give a satisfactory answer to the question, but I confess I cannot. There is, however, in my mind, no difficulty in deciding that an embargo would become more injurious to us than all depredations will be; much more injurious to us than to the French, and indeed much more to the other nations who have colonies than to the French. It would be particularly inconvenient to the English, who are now fighting for the independence of the neutral nations which remain unconquered by France. This idea is so obvious, that I shall expect many zealous advocates for an embargo among those who prefer the interests of France to those of the United States. As a permanent measure or principal measure of any system, I consider an embargo as always preposterous, being necessarily more distressing to the nation that imposes it than to the nation against which it is intended to operate; but there are an infinity of cases, in which partial, special, or temporary embargoes may be expedient, and therefore at all times of public danger, the Executive ought to be authorized by law to lay them. In the most probable cases this power cannot be exercised directly by Congress without defeating its own designs.

I now release you from the embargo, and proceed to express my hopes that the first measures of Congress will be to provide more revenue. A land tax,

however unpalatable at first, will be approved by the people themselves after they are brought to contemplate a little more soberly the nature and extent of the public dangers. A few frigates which are in forwardness ought to be equipped forthwith, and the merchants should be authorized to defend their vessels as far as it can be done without actual war. If no better idea occurs on this point, let convoys accompany them who shall fulfil the 27th article of the treaty, which prescribes the conduct of armed vessels of one nation towards the trading vessels of another. In the West India scene, where we suffer greatly from little paltry pirates, this sort of defence would be sufficient generally; but a minute examination of the rights of nations is necessary to enable a man to delineate this system fully. Our most valuable and exposed seaports should be better fortified, and a small military corps raised and established to keep the fortresses. Thus prepared, and provided for the worst, I would [say], diplomatically, that none of these things are to be understood as making a rupture with France, but on the contrary no offence is authorized against the persons, properties, or rights of the French republic, or any of its citizens, to whom we are disposed to do justice, as we always have done, and with whom we wish to be at peace; but that the measures are wholly defensive, &c. If these measures can be carried, adjourn for three months.

With respect to a new embassy, it would be disgraceful and would indicate a dread of France, which is already too great; but my principal objection to it is, that it may be easily made the means of recruiting the exhausted strength of the French party within our country, (*i. e.* by making propositions which would be popular here, and only insisting on one or two points which would involve us in a contest with Great Britain) and their mischiefs are more to be dreaded than any their masters can perpetrate without.

Thus, my friend, you see with what readiness I give you my crudest opinions. If they are erroneous, it will be satisfactory that they have no authority, and I, no responsibility. But before I close this letter, let me entreat you to be at Philadelphia on the day mentioned by the President. Probably you will then find a well digested plan of the Executive, which, if not repugnant to your own ideas, you will zealously support. If no system is formed by the Executive, or such as shall be formed is not supported, there will be no consistency, and of course no efficiency in our measures. If I were to fill another sheet, I should probably suggest nothing which has not been already familiar to your mind. There can be nothing new in this. It is, however, the best return I can make to your very flattering letter, and may be regarded as an additional proof of the great esteem with which I am truly your friend, &c.,

GEORGE CABOT.

## TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 19, 1797.

The last accounts from France mention that General Pinckney had gone to Amsterdam, in consequence of orders from the Directory. The treatment he

received was rude and insolent, in the highest degree. The Directory, however, continued to profess friendship for the American people. The American stocks rose in England in consequence of the late disorder in the affairs of the bank; this I consider a bad omen for British credit; indeed there is but little reason to doubt that a national bankruptcy in some form or other, is unavoidable.

Nothing new is observable in our domestic affairs, except that there is reason to believe that the aggressions of France will tend to unite the people. The last publications from the Department of State have been useful. The plan of measures to be recommended to Congress, is not yet entirely settled. I presume, however, that an increase of naval force for the protection of our coasts and commerce; permission to the merchants to arm for *defence;* the improvement of fortifications; *the enrollment of a force with a view principally to the blacks in the most southern states,* and the increase of the revenues will be deemed advisable. There will, I presume, be no question about the expediency of keeping a minister in Europe, properly authorized to open negotiations whenever the consent of France can be obtained. The times are indeed critical, and there is no doubt but France intends and expects to be able to establish a political influence in this country. I trust, however, that they will find themselves mistaken, and that the kind Providence which has hitherto protected this country, will guard its liberties and independence.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

Brookline, April 22d, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

Since I wrote you last Mr. Swan has returned from New York, where he had been to have a last interview with Adet, who is about sailing for France. Swan has stated to a friend of mine, that Adet has no expectation of a war, but relies fully that all misunderstandings will be cleared up immediately upon his arrival in France, or upon the arrival of his letters, if he himself fails. Thus far Mr. Swan, whom you know. If Adet does confide his sentiments to Swan, he cannot wish them to remain secret. It is conceivable that Adet may wish to see the influence of his nation recovered by a conciliatory conduct towards the United States, but it is more probable that he wishes by exciting this idea here, to prevent all preparatory measures against a different conduct. It has been a striking artifice in the revolutionists to divide and disarm those they intend to attack by leading them to expect moderation and justice. But in every instance of nations and individuals, the credulous have become victims, and I cannot but fear that we too are destined to suffer from this kind of folly. It is hardly within possibility that the House of Representatives should not temporize, rather than act with decision, unless new events occur before they meet, which shall rouse them by rousing the country.

I am well persuaded, however, that if the House should unite with the other branches, in measures of suitable vigor, the country will go along with the government and support it with constancy. I think too, that firmness and prudence well combined would carry us safe through the crisis, and that France upon the

return of adversity, which will come, will respect us more and treat us better. She now despises us as she does all who don't resist her, and she always respects the English above every other people.

At an early period you asked me "what the people would think should be done by the government to ward off the impending evils." I answered then that they would take their opinion from the government, if the government has one. But I ought perhaps to state to you now, that the expediency of sending an envoy is more generally admitted than denied. At the same time I believe it is expected that other measures of preparation will be taken, so that we may be ready for the worst events. I repeat to all my acquaintances my fears, that if an envoy is sent and received, the French will completely re-establish their undue influence in this country. Yours truly,

G. CABOT.

## FROM FISHER AMES.

DEDHAM, April 24, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

Your letter afforded me uncommon pleasure. The profound reflections you have made on the subject, and the just conclusions you have deduced, made so much impression upon my mind, as in a degree to shake my creed in regard to a commission to negotiate with France. Mr. Cabot I knew was of your sentiment, and although your letter is headed "private," I ventured to show it to him, which I pray you to excuse. He was delighted with the perusal, and confirmed by it in his opinion, not only of the unfitness of sending a new envoy or envoys, but also of your title to the esteem and regard he has for you, in which I assure you he is not singular.

I have reflected a good deal on your reasoning, and believe that I have neither grown stubborn in defence of my first notions, nor sufficiently precise and correct in my explanation of the reasons that still maintain their ground with me. I see difficulties and risks in every course of proceeding, and I cannot otherwise recommend my first impression, than to insist that fewer and less perplexing ones seem to attend a new negotiation than any other plan. I had intended to state my ideas much at large, but company, business, and indisposition prevent.

The injuries of France afford a cause for war, and would justify the resort to arms, or to reprisals, without any further demand of reparation. But war and reprisals are both out of the question. Neither government, nor the House of Representatives, nor the citizens' desire, or would concur in either. Patience, silence, mean acquiescence under French wrongs would gratify the Jacobins, and not greatly displease the timid, the avaricious, and the multitude who never act from their own impulse; perhaps a majority prefer peace with outrage, rapine, insult, dishonour, and the interdiction of the ocean, to a war with France. I know that an embargo would soon evince that our people would not submit long to be interdicted all navigation. Yet speculatists and some men of business would say, before it is tried, that it would be better to abjure the ocean. Whether it proceeds from timidity, avarice, French fanaticism, (which though weakened

is still a giant) or the stupor which every public falls into, when for want of an impression from government, it is left to the anarchy of its own opinions, the fact appears to me that the dread of war is stronger still than the sense of honour or of injury. We, the people, are in truth more kickable than I could have conceived.

War therefore, or measures leading to it, and capable of being misrepresented as intended to provoke and hasten it, will be out of the question, especially in the House of Representatives of the United States. The men of intelligence and real patriotism will say, war is to be avoided; and French injuries on the seas, and influence in the United States, are to be resisted by other means if possible, than war; but they foresee and dread the infinite evils of our situation. If the Jacobins should prevail in the House; if government should be in consequence paralysed; if nothing should be done by Congress but to authorize an embargo, as your own fears suggest; our affairs will be worse than they now are. The imbecility of government and the preponderance of Jacobinism will enrage an hundred, but discourage a million. We shall then be given up to France, bound hand and foot. To avoid this if possible, is a duty; self preservation demands that the inefficiency, and still more, (though not much more) the ill disposition of Congress should be guarded against. The measures you suggest are all right, wise, indispensable; but an attempt to adopt them, if Congress should reject it, would place us on worse ground than ever. The first question and a grave one, is whether Congress will consent to arming vessels, increasing taxes, putting posts in a posture of defence, &c., &c., *without* a plan of negotiation to avert war. I think they will not. The precedent in the case of Great Britain, of negotiating while we did a very little to prepare for war, will be quoted, and perversely enough, but with effect in the House and on the country. Strong measures will not suit weak and trimming men, whose real dispositions, however, are federal, unless covered and sweetened by the *commission*; they would dare to vote for provisional measures, when such as are more direct and uncovered would be scouted. In a word, would not the coöperation of Congress be hopeless without any such pacific aspect of any defensive system. Even with it the prospect as to Congress is dubious. I will not enlarge on this part of the subject; your own reflections will supply the omission of my remarks. If then Congress would in one case coöperate and not in the other, the plan of negotiating anew seems eligible, unless its intrinsic demerit forbids our approbation. I see no such evident dishonour or mischief in it, as the best and wisest of my friends seem to do. To demand reparation, to get ready to take it, to declare that we will not rest contented and at peace without it, may be smoothly done; but it will be the *fortiter*. It will concenter opinions, it will stop Jacobin mouths on one point at least, put them in the wrong on others, prepare the public for the issue if unfavourable, break the continuity of that affection, or rather folly, which has kept us so long in hot water, gain time for government, and give us the chance of events. It is besides, according to my hypothesis, *Hopson's choice*, for no other road lies open I admit the vile insults offered to General Pinckney; the dread of Mr. M. if he should go, which I almost decide ought not to be; the effect of delusive, fraternizing offers to our envoys which must be refused; (and

yet the refusal would afford a new pretext to the French and their partisans); the desire of the French to have us negotiate; these and many other things check and discourage my faith in my own opinion. I conclude, however, very safely, that you at Philadelphia who watch in the cabinet, must with your worthy associates, combine some proper line of proceeding for Congress to adopt; the true members must be united and zealous; the public must be prepossessed in favour of that line; and strongly addressed and roused to require it as in case of the treaty. Let me entreat you with Col. Pickering and Mr. McHenry, to digest the system for the House, and through Tracy, N. Smith, Davenport, Sewall, &c., &c., to secure the co-operation of the federalists at their first coming. This is no time for your overscrupulous reserves.

You may command me by suggesting the ideas which ought to be held up. I accept the office of fifer, while Otis, &c., carry muskets. Pray offer my best respects to Mrs. Wolcott, and when you see Mr. R., to him and family. When you see Tracy, my prayers and blessing to him. I wish you the victory. With unfeigned esteem, yours, &c.,

FISHER AMES.

P. S. I began with a design to be brief, because I was in a hurry, which, as usual, has lengthened and confused my ideas. This is the substance of them.

Our case is bad, and if government should be passive, would be worse. Government cannot act without or against Congress. Congress will not do any right thing (an embargo is not of the number, if general) unless it tends to promote peace, or at least not to endanger it. To negotiate again is not servile or mean, if the right men are appointed, and the objects of the negotiation are reparation and the abolition of the clause for the eventual guarantee of the French W. India Islands. Negotiating will be *honourable* if we arm and prepare force and revenue, and *useful*, if the public is made to look to the issue, as depending on the French—peace, if they are just and friendly; war, if insolent and rapacious. The dread of war and of the French are obstacles to government, without negotiation *de novo;* but with that, they are auxiliaries, and the very Jacobins will applaud the design, though they may not concur in the energy of the means. I request Mr. Goodrich's attention to this postscript. A firm face of resolution in the U. S. would certainly secure peace. A servile acquiescence would destroy our peace, or our government, or both.

## TO RUFUS KING.

PHILA., April 27th, 1797.

(Private.)

I have to acknowledge your favour of the 12th December.

* * * *

The public mind appears to be firm and composed, though all expect that the convulsions in Europe will considerably affect us; but there appears to be a calm and determined resolution to cultivate peace, consistently with the preservation of honour and independence. If the aggressions of France force the country

into a war, there will be a general regret; but I think I can assure you that there will be but few tories. The present House of Representatives will afford a better copy of the public opinion than the last, but still the likeness will not be a good one. Whatever is essential, will, however, be done. This country will not renounce its independence and government.

I have made complete provision by the best of remittances, for the interest and instalment due in Amsterdam, on the first of June. We want more revenue, but will get on safely as we are. The bank of the United States is in a better situation than when you left us.

If by any fair and proper means the public attention in England can be turned towards our funds, the circumstance will be improved to good purpose here. On the contrary, if what I see must and will happen in England, should produce a distrust, with respect to all government securities, our credit will decline with that of the British. Such a prejudicial association of ideas as would combine our affairs with those of another nation, ought to be prevented, if possible.

There is a general acquiescence in the election of President Adams. The change has furnished an opportunity for the pride of some influential men to retreat.

You know that I ought not to anticipate the decisions of the ensuing session; but I may conjecture that measures will be adopted for instituting negotiations, whenever the consent of France can be obtained in a manner compatible with national honour. I presume that an increase of revenue, with an efficient system of defence, in respect to commerce and territory, will also be established. As the house of *Ucaligon* appears to be on fire, it is, doubtless, proper to take measures for preventing it from spreading to our own.

I am so fully engaged, that I shall not be able to write to any of my friends and acquaintance with you, by this conveyance. I must therefore beg of you the favour to present to them my best respects.

Before Congress met, the following requisition was sent to the heads of departments. Wolcott's answer, notwithstanding its length, is inserted in full, both from its intrinsic interest, and because it exhibits his real opinions and their foundation.

FROM THE PRESIDENT.

Philadelphia, April 14th, 1797.

The President of the United States requests the Secretary of the Treasury to take into his consideration the following questions, and make report of his opinion in writing, viz:—

1st. Whether the refusal to receive Mr. Pinckney, and the rude orders to quit Paris and the Territory of the Republic, with such circumstances of indignity,

insult, and hostility, as we have been informed of, are bars to all further measures of negotiation? or in other words, will a fresh mission to Paris be too great an humiliation of the American people in their own sense and that of the world?

2d. If another mission be admissible, can any part, and what parts or articles of the treaty of amity and commerce with Great Britain be offered to France or ultimately conceded to that power in case of necessity if demanded by her?

3d. What articles of the treaty of alliance and of the treaty of commerce with France, should be proposed to be abolished?

4th. Whether it will be prudent to say any thing concerning the consular convention with that power, and if it will, what alterations in it should be proposed?

5th. Whether any new articles, such as are not contained in either of our treaties with France or England, shall be proposed, or can be agreed to, if proposed by the French government?

6th. What documents shall be prepared to send to France, as evidence of insults and injuries committed against the commerce of the United States by French ships of war or privateers, or by French Commissioners, agents, officers, or citizens?

7th. In what terms shall remonstrances against spoliations of property, capture of vessels, imprisonment of masters and mariners, cruelties, insults and abuses of every kind to our citizens, be made?

8th. In what terms shall restitution, reparation, compensation, and satisfaction, be demanded for such insults and injuries?

9th. Shall demand be made of payment to our citizens for property purchased by the French government in Europe, or in the East or West Indies?

10th. Shall demand be made of the French government of payment for vessels and cargoes captured and seized, whether by ships of war or private ships?

11th. Shall any commission of inquiry and examination like that with England be agreed to?

12th. What articles in the British treaty can be offered to France without compensation, and what with compensation, and what compensation shall be demanded?

13th. Shall a project of a new treaty, abolishing the old treaties and consular convention, be proposed to France?

14th. Shall such a project, with a project of instructions to the minister, be proposed and laid before the Senate for their advice and consent before they be sent to Europe.

JOHN ADAMS.

PHILADELPHIA, April 15th, 1797.

The President of the United States requests the Secretary of the Treasury to commit to writing in detail, and report to the President as early as may be convenient, such particulars as the Secretary may think necessary or expedient to be inserted in the President's speech at the opening of the ensuing Congress under the heads:

1st. Of such things as ought to be communicated to Congress concerning the state of the Union.

2d. Of such measures as ought to be recommended to Congress for their adoption.

And the President's desire is that the Secretary would not confine himself to matters merely within the Treasury department, but give himself a liberal latitude, both in relation to the other departments and to the illustrations and reasonings in support of his opinions.

The President also requests the Secretary to report to him his opinion of the articles which ought to be inserted in the instructions of an ambassador, envoy ordinary or extraordinary, or minister plenipotentiary, to be sent to France, upon the supposition it should be deemed consistent with the dignity, honour, and interest of the United States to send another mission to that power.

JOHN ADAMS.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

April 25th, 1797.

The Secretary of the Treasury in obedience to the commands of the President of the United States respectfully reports his opinion on the following questions.

QUESTION 1st. – Whether the refusal to receive Mr. Pinckney and the rude orders to quit Paris and the territories of the Republic with such circumstances of indignity, insult, and hostility as we have been informed of, are bars to all further measures of negotiation? or in other words, will a fresh mission to Paris be too great an humiliation of the American people in their own sense and that of the world?

A consideration of this question leads to a review of various proceedings of the American and French governments. It has been long well known to the President and has lately been demonstrated to the public, that since the year 1778, France has never relinquished the design then formed, of maintaining an improper influence in the councils of America. Her system for accomplishing this purpose has been governed by two leading principles. 1st. To impair and weaken the energy of the federal government and union; and 2d, to excite and promote discontents, contests or actual war with her rival, Great Britain. The opinions and writings of influential characters in France and the measures of the ministers, consuls, and secret agents of the government of that country here, have accordingly been uniformly directed to these ends. It is unnecessary to prove these positions in any other manner than by referring to the known opposition of French agents to the adoption of the present constitution of the United States; to the uniform connection between French politics and anti-federalism; and to the notorious popularity in France, of the opposers of every leading measure of our administration. This line of conduct is not to be reconciled with French ideas of government; for while anti-federalism is here supported and encouraged, the maxims and principles of American federalists, who are the only advocates for any form of national government in the United States, are held to

be criminal when applied to France and to other countries, where her views and interests have led to a different policy. To prevent the inconsistency from becoming too apparent; and to lessen the influence and popularity of the friends of our national independence; every pretext has been seized to represent their measures and views as incompatible with friendship to France and the stipulations of our treaties in her favour.

The progress of a measure so contrary to the views of France as an adjustment of disputes with Great Britain, could not be viewed by her with other emotions than of extreme solicitude. Accordingly every attempt was made to prevent overtures for negotiation; after a mission was determined on by the President, the character of the minister was attacked and stigmatized—the public passions were stimulated by every possible artifice. Improper suggestions were made to the American Minister at Paris, and by him countenanced and disseminated in this country; nevertheless the negotiation terminated in a treaty with Great Britain. From the nature of the publication which appeared before and immediately after the treaty was divulged, it is almost certain that the French government, or at least their party here, had in consequence of information irregularly obtained, systematically concerted and arranged their objections; the more unexceptionable the treaty was found to be, the more was France interested in defeating its effects.

The prejudices and discontents which had been artfully excited in the public mind, were no otherwise opposed by the friends of government, who were then unacquainted with the stipulations of the treaty, than by encouraging unreasonable expectations of great concessions by Great Britain, and of positive advantages to be derived from the negotiation. When it was afterwards discovered that we had obtained nothing more than was our right, and on condition of performing some duties which had been neglected; that our commerce was to remain essentially on the old footing, and which though on the whole advantageous, was susceptible of great meliorations, and moreover, when it was known that Great Britain would not relax from certain maxims of the law of nations which had been supposed to be unfavourable to pacific and commercial states, there was, evidently, a momentary declension of the public confidence and a general sense of disappointment in the community.

It was intended that the first impression should be made upon the Senate; and it is now known that until the vote was actually taken, a rejection of that body was confidently expected.

The next attack was made upon the President, by means of popular addresses, which were aided by the artifice and chicanery of Mr. Randolph; a fortunate discovery of his perfidy, however, accelerated a decision which would, in any event, have been shortly made by the eminently impartial, virtuous, and enlightened mind of the Executive.

A reliance was then placed on the opposition of the House of Representatives; and it is known that this opposition was, in defiance of the Constitution, conducted with a concert and pertinacity, of which there are few examples.

The last resource has been an attempt to influence the election of a President

of the United States, by means of the terror of war, and by measures of actual hostility against the commerce of this country.

On the ground of facts thus briefly detailed, it is assumed as a principle, that one of the objects of France is to regain a political influence in the United States, which has been lately in some measure impaired; and that her complaints against the treaty with Great Britain, and the measures adopted for the preservation of the neutrality of the United States, are pretexts to cover her design.

But though this is believed to be the truth, yet it is admitted to be the duty of the United States to weigh dispassionately, and to reply with temper, even to unfounded complaints of a foreign nation. A cause founded in reason and justice, can never suffer by discussion.

It appears necessary to examine how far this has already been done.

The complaints of France respecting our construction of the commercial treaty and Consular convention, and the extent of her rights, as a belligerent nation, in relation to our country, have been seasonably and fully discussed; and the constructions of the Executive have, in every instance, been confirmed by both houses of Congress; by the Judiciary department, and by public opinion, as expressed by the Legislatures of most of the States. Decisions so made, and especially by a nation in a state of peace, and for the purpose of preserving that peace, cannot be rescinded without national humiliation and dishonour.

With respect to the treaty with Great Britain, which furnishes the principal subject of contention, it may be observed that, prior to the ratification by the President, a copy was delivered to the French minister, and that the objections stated by him were fairly and fully refuted.

As the measures pursued by the opposers of the treaty in this country, justified apprehensions that discontents would be manifested by the French Government; Mr. Monroe was at an early period furnished with arguments to enable him to vindicate his country. It is true that they were not employed for this purpose as soon as was expedient; and yet, if his declarations are to be credited, no specific objections were ever stated, until a short time before he entered upon the discussion in March, 1796. A reference to the correspondence prior to that time, will, it is believed, justify an opinion that the French government relied upon the efficacy of the opposition here; and were willing to preserve, if possible, the advantages arising from vague and indefinite expressions of discontent, rather than incur the hazard of counteracting the policy of their friends, and expose themselves to refutation, by a specification of objections.

As soon as the President was informed that the French government meditated an unfriendly course of conduct towards this country, he determined to send a new minister to make explanations, and selected Mr. Pinckney for this purpose. In the message to Congress, dated January 19th, 1797, the President declared "that the immediate object of his (Mr. Pinckney's) mission, was to make to the French government such explanations of the principles and conduct of our own, as by manifesting our good faith, might remove all jealousy and discontent, and maintain that harmony and good understanding which it had been his constant solicitude to preserve."

The character with which Mr. Pinckney was invested, was that of *Minister*

*Plenipotentiary*, and his letter of credence, of which a copy is in the possession of the Directory, announced that the mission originated in a disposition "sincerely desirous to maintain that good understanding which, from the commencement of their alliance, had subsisted between the two nations; and to efface unfavourable impressions, banish suspicions, and restore that cordiality which was at once the evidence and pledge of a friendly union." This circumstance is mentioned, as it is thereby demonstrated that the *special object of the mission* must be known to the French government.

Instead of receiving the explanations respectfully tendered by the government of the United States, the Directory has declared to Mr. Monroe, though his powers had then terminated, *that they will not receive nor acknowledge, another Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States, until the grievances of which France has complained have been redressed.*

The personal treatment which Mr. Pinckney received in Paris was, moreover, offensive, and a violation of the law of nations; it is now understood that he has received orders to quit the territories of the French republic.

But it may be asked, have not the French Directory some plausible pretext for rejecting Mr. Pinckney; and is it necessary to infer from their conduct that rupture is unavoidable? As this question is of great magnitude and delicacy, particular attention is due to every suggestion which has appeared.

A communication in Bache's paper of March 30th, contains the most skilful apology of which the case is susceptible; and is believed to indicate the wishes, and to have originated with, a leader of the party which has hitherto been in opposition to the government.[a]

The communication states that the refusal to recognize Mr. Pinckney is no more than was *expected*, and indeed no more than was *prognosticated* by many of our citizens. That the Directory, having *suspended their ordinary minister* here, could not *receive an ordinary minister from the United States;* that on the score of national etiquette, it was out of the question; and on the score of *aggression*, it was less to be expected. It is then proposed, in reference to what was done in the case of Great Britain, that an Envoy Extraordinary should be appointed to suit the "*solemnity of the occasion*," and to carry with him the "*temper and sensibilities of the country*." Each of the above suggestions, as well as the proposed measure, deserve a particular remark.

That the refusal of Mr. Pinckney was expected and was foretold, is certain; and it adds to other proofs that a party in this country act in conjunction with, and are devoted to the views of the government of France; but that the refusal was proper or consistent with the professed friendship of France, the acknowledged right of nations, or was required by the honour of the French government; cannot, it is presumed, be shewn.

Is the refusal grounded on the suspension of the French minister here? This pretext cannot be admitted, for Mr. Monroe was suffered to remain in Paris, and was recognized as minister long after the suspension of M. Adet was announced to him by the French government. By their own act, the Directory

[a] Mr. Madison.

have therefore admitted that the suspension of their minister here did not impose on them the necessity of refusing to recognize our minister in Paris. Besides, it is remarkable that when Mr. Monroe parted with the Directory, he carried with him their "regrets."

Is the refusal to be justified on the score of national etiquette? It will be admitted that every nation ought to consult its glory, preserve its rank, and defend its independence; but it is equally true that these duties are reciprocal, and are obligatory on the government of the United States as well as of France. Upon what does the etiquette depend? Is it not a creature of society, depending altogether upon conventional rules? If so, what are the rules of European nations on the point in question? It is answered; they agree in pronouncing that a Minister Plenipotentiary and an Envoy Extraordinary are precisely of the same grade. Minute distinctions exist, indeed, at some Courts. In France, no distinction has ever been recognized. It is by Ministers Plenipotentiary that treaties are most commonly formed, and national disputes adjusted. For the purpose of adjusting our disputes with France, Mr. Pinckney was appointed. This object was moreover indicated in his letters of credence.

The objection respecting the *grade* of the minister being entirely ungrounded, what circumstance required the appointment of an *Envoy Extraordinary?* Is it to be understood that the Directory are offended that Mr. Monroe has been recalled? This presupposes France to be capable of urging the inadmissible pretension that the American Minister in Paris must be a character disposed to favour the views of France in America, and not a character disposed to promote the views of the American government in France.

Next it may be asked is there not some just objection of a *personal* nature against Mr. Pinckney, which may palliate if not excuse the conduct of the Directory? It may be boldly answered that there is none;—in point of character, connexions, education and public services, he is truly one of the most distinguished citizens—a sincere republican, a rational friend of the ostensive and avowed principles of the French Revolution; at the same time an honest man and supporter of the honour and independence of his country.

The result of these reflections is that in refusing to recognise Mr. Pinckney, the Directory have knowingly rejected, with circumstances of insult and indignity, a fair and honourable proposal for the discussion and adjustment of all disputes.

The foregoing observations are made principally with the view of vindicating the Executive from the imputation of having omitted any thing in respect to France, which was required by propriety. It is not intended to infer that rupture is unavoidable, or even on that supposition that further measures of negotiation ought not to be immediately instituted. It is for the interest of the United States to remain at peace, and war can never be terminated without negotiation. Neither honour nor policy require that the United States should ever hesitate about making advances for promoting peace and friendship with any nation; all that is requisite is, that the *mode* of making pacific overtures be such as not to indicate servility of disposition, or unnecessarily to concede that errors have been committed by the government.

But it is not to be denied that the management of negotiations with France,

in a manner compatible with national honour, is a task of great delicacy; requiring all the prudence, vigilance, and firmness of the government. To judge of the difficulties—the situation, views, and interests of France and of the United States, must be surveyed.

On the continent of Europe, France is everywhere successful; Spain, Italy, and Holland, being completely within her power, at least for the present. The Emperor of Russia is said to have refused to comply with the engagements of his mother, and will probably remain neutral during the remainder of the war. The King of Prussia, though really interested in repressing the views of France, appears to be more strongly impressed with a desire to reduce the Emperor of Germany, than alarmed for the security of his own dominions. England is triumphant on the ocean, but deeply wounded in her vital part, in her credit and finances.

This being the state of things, it is most probable that hereafter the energies of France will be principally directed against England. To effect the humiliation of this power, France is stimulated by the powerful motives of ambition, interest, and revenge. In respect to one or both of these nations, the present war can hardly fail to produce an extreme and violent issue.

The means by which England is to be attacked are already developed. The nation is to be disturbed by real or pretended invasions; every country which France can influence is to be required to restrict British commerce; neutral commerce of every kind is to be assailed. The consequences intended to be produced, are conquest, if this be practicable; but at any rate insupportable expenses and destruction of credit and resources.

It is certain that the commerce of the United States is of great importance to Great Britain; its security and extension are, therefore, incompatible with the views of her enemy.

The opinion of France is expressed in the notes published by M. Adet; in the address to Mr. Monroe, and in various publications, evidently proceeds on a belief that their system of commercial depredation is not irreconcilable with the design of maintaining a political influence in our public councils. It is probably imagined that for a time the people may be induced to vindicate France at the expense of their own government; it may also be imagined that the loss of revenue and public credit will render the administration of our present system impracticable and occasion its dissolution, thereby opening a door for influence by means of civil dissensions; and it is not impossible that there may be an ulterior motive confined to the breasts of ambitious men in power, inclining them to discredit our inviting example of a mild form of government, now known to be unattainable in France.

Though the internal affairs of the United States are in some respects mending, yet there are circumstances not a little embarrassing. There is still a party blindly devoted to French attachments; in the southern states the slaves are numerous, and this description of men universally consider the French as friends and deliverers; the influence and popularity of the general government is inconsiderable in the western; if not inclined to favour France it may at least be believed that many of their men of influence are disposed to embrace any favour-

able opportunity for promoting the aggrandizement of the western country; if intrusive settlements upon the new lands were to be favoured, it is not unlikely that emigrations would take place in such a degree as would considerably weaken the country. It will be remembered that the efforts of Virginia were, during the last war, rendered nugatory by the settlement of Kentucky; the same thing may happen again upon a larger scale.

The revenue of the United States at present depends principally on a flourishing state of commerce. To substitute internal revenues equal to any considerable deficiency, and sufficient to defray extraordinary expenses, will be a work of great intrinsic difficulty; in the discussions on this subject party prejudices and foreign influence may operate under the disguise of patriotism.

The credit of the country has been injured by extravagant speculations, the evils of which will be rendered more perceptible as money becomes scarce.

The effects of any serious embarrassments in British credit are at this time incalculable; if they should produce *distrust* with respect to the solidity of *all* public funds, our credit will decline with that of Great Britain. The last accounts, however, encourage a hope that public opinion will establish a discrimination favourable to this country.

The present government of the United States having never been tried in a state of war, leaves it a matter of speculative doubt whether the organization and distribution of the executive power between the general and state governments, will be found in practice favourable to that vigour and concert which in military operations is indispensable.

Of these disadvantages, it is probable the French have formed exaggerated calculations; indeed, the insolence of some of their pretensions proves that they entertain a proud confidence in their own power, and contempt for our supposed imbecility.

But in proportion to the magnitude and reality of the evil, it behooves the government to be prompt and decisive. If a want of tone and energy has produced the danger, vigorous and energetic measures are the proper remedy.

To save the honour of the country, it is deemed important that no minister should enter France without a passport previously obtained, and without the formal consent of that government to the commencement of negotiations.

It is also essential that no imputation should rest upon the government in respect to Mr. Pinckney's mission, and therefore that he should be a prominent agent in the proposed negotiation.

But as the issuing of a new commission to Mr. Pinckney would be a measure liable to various constructions; as it might draw in question the sincerity of the professed desire for peace, or the propriety of the former commission; and as on the principles herein assumed no superior diplomatic grade is known except that of ambassador, which is not contemplated in any act of Congress, and for which no compensation, or one very inadequate is established; it appears to be expedient that some one or more persons should be joined with General Pinckney in a new commission: but to impress France with a conviction that the government will not be swayed by their influence—to intimate in an unexceptionable manner our opinion that the first overtures ought to have been accepted—and to preserve the

confidence of the true friends of American independence, a careful selection of characters appears to be indispensable.

If a person known to be attached to the views of France, or so reputed in public opinion, were to be entrusted with this mission, the following unfavourable consequences may be apprehended:

1st. The measure would carry an appearance, in the view of France, of inability in the government to resist her influence, or at least a compromise, which would encourage further enterprise.

2d. The reverse effect would be produced at home; the friends of government would be in some measure cooled and discouraged, while the spirits and activity of the opposite party would be excited.

3d. If the commission consisted of two persons of opposite political sentiment, there would be danger of dissensions which would disgrace and injure the government.

4th. If in a commission of three persons, two persons were appointed who were reputed partisans of France, there would be extreme danger that something would be done which would strengthen an influence already dangerous to the independence of this country and perhaps embroil us with another nation.

5th. If in a commission of three persons, only one reputed partisan of France was named, he, if a man of real principle and honour, would not accept the appointment; and, considering the utter incongruity of the opinions which prevail in respect to French policy and the conduct of our government, such an arrangement would bear too much the aspect of a political artifice, which could not deceive France or conciliate parties in this country.

6th. A commission, including one reputed partisan of France, and two persons of a different description, might afford an opportunity to play into the hands of France, and might furnish a medium of cabal with their party in this country, rather than of negotiation. If France is indisposed to accommodation, as it is not improbable, she might be enabled to propose terms to which the commissioners might not be authorized to accede, and thus throw the odium of failure on the government; or if the commission should be invested with unlimited powers, an unfavourable treaty might be made, or a failure occasioned by the disagreement of the commissioners on a point apparently of little comparative importance. In short, the responsibility for a bad measure would either be divided with the friends of government, or they would be exposed to censure for what would appear to be unreasonable pertinacity.

7th. It is an undeniable fact, that there exists in the United States, a dangerous French influence; and so bold has the faction become in some places, that an avowed partiality for France, in opposition to the measures of our government, is no injury to the popularity of a public character. To keep themselves in countenance, this faction asserts the existence of a British influence in the public councils. It is constantly affirmed that Mr. Jay and other estimable characters, are of a British party. It is now required that a French partisan be sent to France on the ground of reciprocity. It is believed that a concession on this point would produce a dangerous association of ideas in the public mind—that it would en-

courage irregular enterprizes of ambition, and weaken those patriotic attachments which are the only security of elective governments.

8th. The sending of three ministers to France from this country, would be attended with an expense which would excite unpleasant reflections in the minds of many, especially if it should be thought also advisable to send one or more ministers to the northern neutral courts of Europe.

For the reasons which have been stated, the expediency of uniting two of the ministers now in Europe, with Mr. Pinckney, is respectfully suggested. If the idea be admissible, it is believed that Mr. King and Mr. Adams are the most proper characters.

But candour requires that it should be stated to the President, that there are sincere and intelligent friends of government, who maintain the opinion, that one personage of the commission ought to possess credit and influence with France, and the party here in opposition to the government. Their arguments are: 1st, That the measure will furnish a bridge to the pride of France to retreat. 2nd, That it will give France the motive of endeavouring to strengthen her party, by appearing to yield peace to a leader of that party. 3rd, That it will convince the people completely, that the government is at least as solicitous to avoid war with France, as it was to avoid it with Great Britain. 4th, That it will take from the partisans of France the argument that as much has not been done in her case, as in that of Great Britain. 5th, That in case of failure, it will contribute to the important end of uniting opinion at home. 6th, That considering the power of France and the unprepared situation of this country, it is wise by some early *condescension* to avoid the danger of future *humiliation*.

It is observable that some of the ideas advanced in favour of the measure under consideration, have been suggested as leading to a different conclusion; it will of course remain with the President to decide whether they shall be deemed arguments or objections, after considering the following summary replies.

1st, Though the pride of France ought not to be offended, yet it ought not to be flattered at the expense of the pride of the United States. 2nd, Though France may be soothed, and immediate rupture avoided by encouraging an expectation of increasing her influence, yet, the remedy is worse than the disease. *War* may be compared to an acute but not mortal disorder, while *foreign influence* is to popular governments sometimes a slow, but always a corrosive and fatal poison. 3rd, It is self-evident that the government cannot desire a war with France, as it must be a war purely defensive, without a possibility of securing advantages; *besides*, 4th, Measures equivalent to those adopted in respect to Great Britain, have already taken in respect to France, and her conduct has been, and continues to be more violent and unjust, and unreasonable, than was experienced from Great Britain. 5th, There is no reason to doubt that the real unsophisticated opinion of America can be united in defensive measures, combined with a tender of negotiation, such as is proposed, while all experience has shown it to be impracticable to conciliate faction; the terms which are obtained by compromise with faction, ever resemble in their nature, the calms which precede earthquakes. 6th, The power of France, whatever its degree may be, is at present directed by a government ambitious—unprincipled; neither desiring nor

capable of enjoying peace ; whatever is attainable by fraud or violence, it will attain ; to be safe from the enterprizes of this power, it is necessary that the power of the United States should be organized, and put in a state capable of the greatest degree of activity ; it is in this way alone, that the government can save the country from *humiliation.*

Question 2d. If another mission be admissible, can any part, and what parts or articles of the treaty of amity and commerce with Great Britain be offered to France, or ultimately conceded to that power, in case of necessity, if demanded by her.

Answer. The provisions of the commercial treaty between the United States and France, are for the most part unexceptionable, or at least as favourable as can be expected to be obtainable in a treaty to be negotiated at this time ; it will, therefore, be sufficient for the United States to manifest a willingness to enter cordially and sincerely into the discussion of any alterations which may be proposed by France. If, in other respects, the existing disputes can be adjusted, and the rights of the United States secured, it may be advisable to renounce the principle, that free ships shall make free goods, and to leave commerce in contraband articles, on the footing of the law of nations. This may be effected by assimilating the French treaty, in these respects, to the treaty with Great Britain.

But a construction of the law of nations was attempted to be established by the British, in respect to provisions, which the United States are bound to resist, as well on the ground of interest as consistency. It was asserted by Great Britain, that provisions and other articles, not generally contraband and not destined to places actually invested or blockaded, may become so under special circumstances. The public law of European nations is, for the most part, founded in reason, though, in some respects, it is certainly arbitrary and conventional. Famine is universally considered an authorized and usual means of coercion, in respect to *besieged places ;* but in respectto *great districts,* and particularly to such a nation as France, the doctrine was never applied, as its use never appeared to be practicable prior to the extraordinary state of things in France, in 1793 and 1794. It appears to be unreasonable to make provision in public treaties for rare and unusual events ; the design of treaties being merely to regulate the general conduct of nations ; extreme cases, when they occur, ought to be deemed exceptions to ordinary rules ; the destruction of prisoners of war and the extirpation of nations, in supposable cases, are vindicated by the most humane writers ; but to specify these cases in a treaty of commerce, would be a violation of public decorum, and what has never been done.

As the sensibility of France has been excited by the second clause of the 18th article of the treaty with England, it will be advisable to use special endeavours to vindicate the conduct of the American government in this respect. The proper defence is, that Great Britain would not relax from her construction of the law of nations, and that Mr. Jay would not consent to abandon ours ; that therefore the point remains unadjusted ; that it cannot be denied that in *some* cases provisions may be reasonably deemed contraband, when not destined to places actually invested or blockaded. The case of an army or fleet destined for

invasion, is of this kind. When New York was possessed by the British, although we did not command the sea and could not blockade the British army, yet we did not hesitate to prevent, by all means in our power, neutral nations from furnishing supplies of every kind. The existence of such cases is a vindication of the article agreed to by Mr. Jay, and the want of a specification of them, though much to be regretted, is to be attributed solely to the pertinacity of the British government.

It has been constantly the object of the American government to restrict the list of *contraband of war* to as few articles as possible, and this policy ought to be pursued where the law of nations is indefinite, as in the case of provisions; attempts ought to be made, by specifications, to restrain the exercise of arbitrary discretion. The result of these reflections is, that it ought to be an ultimatum to concede no commercial rights secured to neutral nations, by the European law of nations.

QUESTION 3d. What articles of the treaty of alliance and of the treaty of commerce with France should be proposed to be abolished?

Answer. If a review of the existing treaties shall be proposed by France, it will be proper to propose an abolition of the guaranty in the eleventh article of the treaty of alliance.

This stipulation must hereafter perpetually operate against the United States. France is becoming more military even than formerly, and the general state of things in Europe leads to a belief that wars will, for a long time be frequent. A guaranty of the liberty, sovereignty, independence, and territorial possessions of the United States, by France, will give us no additional security; on the contrary, our guaranty of the possessions of France, in America, perpetually exposes us to the risque and expense of war, or the dishonour of violating our faith.

But in proportion as we are interested in being discharged from this engagement, France will feel the influence of an opposite interest; accordingly we see that a "*reciprocal guaranty*" of possessions was proposed in M. Genet's instructions to be "*an essential clause in the new treaty*," on the ground "that it nearly concerned the peace and prosperity of the French nation, that a people whose resources increase beyond all calculation, and whom nature had placed so near their rich colonies, should become interested, by their own engagements, in the preservation of these islands."

There being but little ground to expect that France will agree to the abolition of this stipulation, it remains to be considered whether it be susceptible of beneficial modifications.

The existing engagement is of that kind which is called a general guaranty, by the writers on the law of nations. Of course the *casus fœderis* can never occur, except in a *defensive war*. The nature of this obligation is understood to be, that when a war exists, *really* and *truly defensive*, the engaging nation is bound to furnish an *effectual* and *adequate* defence, in co-operation with the power attacked; it follows that the nation *may* be required, in some circumstances, to bring forward its *whole force*.

The nature, degree, and quantity of succour not being ascertained, engagements of this kind are dangerous, on account of their uncertainty. There is al-

ways hazard of doing too much or too little ; and, of course, of being involved in a rupture, opposed by national interests.

Specific succours have the advantage of being certain and less liable to occasion war, but they allow no latitude for the exercise of judgment and discretion, as is the case with a general guaranty.

The great extent of the British power in the West Indies, and their probable future views in that quarter ; the nature of our government, which will always make it extremely difficult to engage a military force, to serve out of the country ; render obligations of this kind highly inconvenient. If the general guaranty cannot be shaken off, it may be expedient to stipulate for a moderate sum of *money*, or a quantity of *provisions*, to be delivered in some of our ports in future defensive wars ; but unless the new terms, which may be obtainable, *are clearly such as to lessen the existing obligation*, it appears advisable to suffer it to remain as at present.

In other respects the treaty of alliance will have no future operation, unless it may be deemed to bear a construction, that France has, thereby, renounced the right of conquering in future wars, Canada, or Louisiana, for herself.

France has repeatedly contended that the imposition of fifty cents per ton on French vessels arriving in the United States, is contrary to the fifth article of the treaty of commerce. The arguments in support of this pretension, are unknown, but it is presumed to be unfounded. The reciprocal right of laying duties equal to those imposed on the most favoured nations, and without any other restriction, seems to be settled by the third and fourth articles. The fifth article appears to have been intended merely to define or qualify the rights of American vessels in France. It is, however, desirable, that the question may be understood and properly settled, but the introduction of a principle of discrimination between the duties on vessels of *different foreign nations*, and in derogation of the power of Congress to raise revenue by uniform duties, on any objects whatever, ought not to be lightly hazarded.

Question 4th. Whether it will be prudent to say anything concerning the consular convention with that power, and if it will, what alteration in it should be proposed ?

Answer. The same opinion is entertained of the policy of proceeding in this case as with respect to the treaties. France has complained that the convention has not been executed on our part, and the United States ought to manifest a willingness to enter into explanations, and to make any reasonable alterations. But it does not appear safe or proper on any account, to do any thing which may favour the claims of the French consuls to exercise any species of judicial authority not merely voluntary ; on the contrary, exertions ought to be made to expunge every clause in the existing convention, which has been construed to support pretensions of this nature ; the convention originated in a design to establish undue influence, and in a want of confidence in our laws and tribunals under the confederation ; whatever may have been the case formerly, under the present government justice is rendered promptly, and with strict impartiality to foreigners ; as there can be no just reason existing at this time for investing consuls with powers interfering in any degree with the authority of our tribunals, the

claim ought to be resisted, as derogatory from the honour of the country, and as a precedent fraught with incalculable evils.

QUESTION 5th. Whether any new articles such as are not contained in either of our treaties with France or England shall be proposed, or can be agreed to if proposed by the French government.

Answer. The present state of things is so unsettled, both in respect to France and other countries, that it is difficult to say what would be the final tendency of any artificial regulations with respect to commerce. The object at which the United States ought to aim, should be the enjoyment in the greatest attainable degree of free commerce with every nation in the world, reserving to our government the right of imposing *uniform duties* on all nations at discretion. All proposals for the naturalization of vessels, or making a common interest with any nation relative to any branch of business ought to be rejected; with these principles in view it will be hardly possible for a negotiator to mistake.

QUESTION 6th. What documents shall be prepared to send to France as evidence of insult and injuries, committed against the commerce of the United States by French ships of war or privateers, or by French commissioners, agents, officers or citizens?

Answer. It is conceived that the forms which were adopted in the case of Great Britain ought to be pursued in this case, with such alterations as the different modes of proceeding in the French courts shall be found to require. In all cases the evidence ought to be the best which the nature of the case will admit. Proof in *particular cases* of *each description* of insult and injury for which the government means to seek redress, ought to be selected and to be well authenticated. These cases, if a specification should be required by France, may be made to serve as a basis for general measures calculated to procure reparation. When Mr. Jay preferred complaints, he was called upon to produce proofs; a few were produced, and the result was an agreement to appoint commissioners or a special provision by some article in the treaty.

QUESTION 7th. In what terms shall remonstrances against spoliations of property, capture of vessels, imprisonment of masters and mariners, cruelties, insults, and abuses of every kind to our citizens, be made?

Answer. It does not appear to be practicable to furnish the negotiator with any very precise instructions on this head, as much will depend on circumstances which cannot be foreseen. The object of the government is to produce a successful result; accordingly, that style and manner of proceeding will be best which shall most directly tend to this end. It is not impossible that there may be such a change of men and measures in France as will render it politic to speak of the treatment we have received with severity; on the other hand, the French government may be determined to frustrate the negotiation and throw the blame on this country, in which case anything like warmth or harshness would be made the pretext.

If things remain in their present situation, the style of remonstrance ought to unite, as much as possible, calm dignity with simplicity, force of sentiment with mildness of expression, and be calculated to impress an idea of inflexible perseverance rather than of distrust or confidence; a negotiator of talents, with gen-

eral intimations of what was desired, would not fail to execute the intentions of the President.

Question 8th. In what terms shall restitution, reparation, compensation, and satisfaction be demanded for such insults and injuries?

Answer. Some of the ideas suggested in the last reply appear to be applicable to this branch of the subject. In an official note it will be sufficient to express an *expectation* of redress, but without specifying the *mode*, this being a matter of detail proper to be embraced in some article of a treaty.

Question 9th. Shall demand be made of payment to our citizens of property purchased by the French government in Europe or in the East or West Indies?

Question 10th. Shall demand be made of the French government of payment for vessels and cargoes captured and seized, whether by ships of war or private ships?

It is believed that payment ought to be demanded in both these cases, and that it ought to appear to be a leading object of the mission to seek for satisfaction on these points. Mr. Pinckney's mission was to make *explanations* to the French government, but as the overtures through him were rejected, the making of *explanations* ought to be not a primary but *collateral* motive to new advances. Indeed, so important is the demand for reparation, that no treaty ought to be concluded which does not satisfactorily provide for this object. Actual payment may be postponed by consent for a reasonable time on account of the disordered state of the French finances; but the obtaining a promise of payment ought to be made an ultimatum.

Prior to the treaty of 1778, France granted pecuniary aid to the United States amounting to three millions of livres, and in 1781, six millions more; military supplies were furnished at the beginning of the war, but for these Mr. Beaumarchais has received payment. The United States ought to show a willingness to allow these aids, by way of discount against the sums due to citizens of the United States, who would in this case become responsible to the said citizens. This will be a mode of reducing the amount of those claims for gratitude, which are found to be so dangerous to the independence, and offensive to the pride of the United States. The proposal will be popular here, but may require some delicacy of management with France. If this offer be not accepted, it will silence future demands.

Question 11th. Shall any commission of enquiry and examination, like that with England, be agreed to?

Answer. This mode of adjusting disputes, or at least of applying general principles to particular cases, has been long practiced in Europe, and appears to be liable to no just exception. It cannot be expected that France will concede to us the privilege of determining on the acts of her government, and of her officers and citizens, done out of her jurisdiction; and it is certainly better to institute a tribunal in which the United States will have a voice and equal influence, than to trust wholly to French tribunals.

Question 12th. What articles in the British treaty can be offered to France without compensation, and what with compensation, and what compensation shall be demanded?

Answer. It is proposed that the treaty with France be assimilated to that with England, by renouncing the principle that free ships shall make free goods, and by leaving the definition of contraband articles on the footing of the law of nations; upon condition that France shall agree to make reparation for injuries done to the United States, in the manner proposed; and upon condition that the treaty of alliance, commerce, and the consular convention, shall be limited in their duration, to a period not exceeding fifteen years; except such articles as may be declaratory of a state of peace, or as are intended to regulate the conduct of the two nations at the commencement of, or during a state of war. The tenth article of the treaty with Great Britain, though much complained of, appears to be liable to no just objection, and one proper to be adopted in a treaty with France.

As the United States are rapidly rising in power and resources, it appears to be proper to avoid entering into indefinite obligations, other than such as are founded merely in morality and justice, and in their own nature of perpetual obligation. The time cannot be far distant when the United States will be able to negotiate with Europe on more advantageous terms than at present.

QUESTION 13th. Shall a project of a new treaty, abolishing the old treaties and consular convention, be proposed to France?

Answer. It is not seen that any advantage would result from proposing such a project, it being the present policy of the United States, not to be forward in promoting negotiations which cannot be otherwise favourable, than as they may terminate the depredations which our commerce is suffering, and procure satisfaction for those which have been already committed.

If minute and accurate instructions are prepared, showing what the United States will concede, if necessary, to obtain those objects, their negotiator can be at no loss how to conduct.

QUESTION 14th. Shall such a project, with a project of instructions to the minister be proposed and laid before the Senate for their advice and consent, before they be sent to Europe?

Answer. It does not appear to be in general safe or advisable to consult the Senate in respect to the organization of treaties. This was, indeed, done at New York, in respect to a treaty proposed with the Creek Indians, and perhaps the same thing has happened in other cases; but as the general practice has been otherwise, the question may be considered unembarrassed by precedents.

1st. The instructions must expose the views and wishes of the United States, and the concessions which they will on any account make. If exposed to the Senate, they will certainly be known to France; this would leave that power master of the negotiation, by enabling them to bring the United States immediately to concede every point which, under any circumstances, might be proposed to be yielded.

2nd. There would be danger that the Senate might be divided in opinion, and the want of that full information which is possessed by the Executive, might occasion honest and able men to mistake the interests and policy of the country. Erroneous opinions thus formed, would have an unfavourable effect upon all collateral measures of the government.

3rd. It is doubtful whether the participation of the Senate, in matters relating to foreign affairs, except in the *appointment* of ministers, and in *consenting* to treaties conditionally negotiated by direction of the President, is consistent with the spirit of the Constitution. The reasoning on which the doubt arises, is as follows: The President has, by the constitution, power to make treaties, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, provided two-thirds of the Senators present concur. The *making* of a treaty, and the *consent* of the Senate, are distinct acts, though both are necessary to fix the obligations of a treaty. It is proper that this important power, which is exclusively vested in the President and Senate, should be exercised in such manner as will best promote the public interests, and preserve the check arising from a distinct and independent responsibility. It is believed that this will be most effectually done by considering that in the distribution of the general power, between the President and Senate, the right of instituting negotiations, of instructing ministers, and of making or receiving propositions which are to form the basis of treaties, rests exclusively with the President; and that the right of approving or rejecting, in whole or in part, all propositions in treaties negotiable by the President, rests exclusively with the Senate. There are, evidently, reasons for this distribution. Secrecy and personal confidence are frequently essential in the formation of treaties, and these advantages would be lost by the participation of the Senate in negotiations; it is sufficient that this body is allowed an absolute negative, which they certainly have, upon the inchoate treaties negotiated by direction of the Executive. The following leading principles ought to be prescribed to govern the negotiation.

1st. That no blame or censure be directly or indirectly imputed to the United States.

2nd. That no aids be stipulated in favour of France, during the present war.

3rd. That no engagement be made, inconsistent with the obligations of any prior treaty.

All which is most respectfully submitted.

It may create some astonishment that after Mr. Adams' determination to send an embassy, he should have requested the opinions of the cabinet on its policy; but none that Wolcott, who knew his determination, should have avoided a direct reply, contenting himself with giving his views on its constitution and direction.

It has been mentioned that he was opposed to the mission. He had endeavored to dissuade the President from the scheme when first broached to him, and, as he supposed, had at least delayed its execution. He considered that national self-respect forbade another mission to the republic after the ignominious expulsion of a minister of

peace from her territories, at least without previous overtures on her part, and that the country should stand on the defensive. In this opinion Mr. Pickering agreed. What the views of the Secretary of War and Attorney General were on this point, is not known; though on the characters to be sent, if a mission was instituted, they coincided with their colleagues. It has, however, been seen, that on this subject many members of the federal party thought differently, and among them Mr. Hamilton, who recommended the union of Mr. Madison and Mr. Cabot to Gen. Pinckney in a commission. Of the superior wisdom of either course, it is unnecessary, perhaps impossible to decide. Wolcott never changed his first opinion.

But without discussing the merits of the question itself, it may be remarked that the subsequent fate of the embassy showed at least the policy of the precaution he recommended when it was resolved upon, viz: that no minister should enter the French territory without previously obtaining a passport and the formal consent of the government to open negotiations. It will be noticed that the language used towards Mr. Pinckney was, that the Directory would not receive another *minister plenipotentiary* from the United States until after a redress of grievances. The door was thus left open to receive an *ambassador extraordinary*, if they thought proper, or to reject him also. Had Mr. Adams seen fit to require this preliminary to the mission dispatched in 1797, the one of 1799, when it was adopted, might have been unnecessary. At all events the conviction would have been forced upon the country that the indisposition to peace was on the part of France, without the mortification of a second and more ignominious repulse to advances on our own part. Results, it is believed, also proved the soundness of the advice, that no one attached to the French interest should be appointed a commissioner, and that if a commission was sent, a mul-

tiplication of diplomatic characters and the attendant expense should be avoided by the union of some of those already in Europe to Mr. Pinckney. The mission was of course resolved upon, and the characters who have been mentioned selected.

It should be remembered that at this time no personal collisions had taken place between the President and his officers. None of the causes which afterwards interrupted the harmony between them, existed. On the part of all the Secretaries there was perfect good will toward the Chief Magistrate, and a sincere disposition to render his administration successful. The origin of the embassy as heretofore exhibited, was unknown to them, and it would seem that Wolcott even supposed himself to be the only person to whom Mr. Adams had communicated his intentions. Its policy, some of them, at least, doubted; the selection of its members as proposed by him, they undoubtedly disapproved; but the question being settled, none of them had a wish other than for the happy accomplishment of its end. These observations are necessary, because it has been intimated from other sources that the desire of the Secretaries improperly to control the President on this occasion was the origin of their dissensions. The assertion is untrue. In regard to Mr. Gerry's nomination, though it shook the confidence of those officers in Mr. Adams' discretion, it produced no personal ill feeling; nor did they otherwise attempt to direct him than by withholding an approbation they could not give.

FROM GEORGE CABOT.

BROOKLINE, May 1st, 1797.

My Dear Friend,

As I hold myself accountable to those by whom *I am sent*, I enclose you a copy of one of my epistles, that it may be seen whether the doctrines I teach are sound or not. I also enclose you an answer from one of the gentlemen to whom my circular had been sent, that you may see how men are affected by a little display of political truth. Mr. Watson writes with a running pen, and therefore

may express a little more than he would if required to be precise ; but in support of his opinion, I may add that Mr. Wm. Gray, who is one of our most sensible men, and the greatest merchant in this state, assures me that he finds men in every place and situation united in the conviction of the perfidy and wickedness of France towards us, and he has no doubt the people will zealously support any efficient measure which the government shall adopt for our protection and defence. I desired my son to transmit you a copy of my letter to Jere. Smith, that you might more perfectly know the ideas I have propagated, and for the same purpose I wish you to read a piece I sent to the printer this morning for the next Centinel, addressed to the lovers of our country and signed *Fortiter in re.*

Several gentlemen who live in the interior of our state, to whom I have written, have made me no reply ; but I am satisfied public opinion is in a right course, and makes a daily progress, so that the only anxiety among good men now is, lest the House of Representatives should be governed by a French faction. I am confirmed in the belief that if the President speaks, with his usual masculine tone of decision, upon the dangers of our country and the duties which arise from them, he will be supported by the spirit and feelings of the bulk of the people. All the tools of France and many of their opposers, earnestly desire that an envoy may be sent. I think it wrong, but it will take place ; and if accompanied by vigorous preparations for possible events, it may do no great harm, especially if the persons sent are not Frenchmen. My own opinion as to the characters suitable, is, that men should be sought whose principles are unquestionable, their respectability acknowledged, and whose detestation of the French tyrants has not been strongly expressed to the public and is not known.

My purest regards to Mrs. Wolcott and your two little girls, I hope will be accepted, in which Mrs. C. always joins me. Your faithful and affectionate friend,

G. CABOT.

Brookline, April 6, 1797.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

If, in a free country like ours, the public welfare ordinarily, or, indeed, ever depends upon the prevalence of just sentiments among the people, it is of the utmost importance that such sentiments should prevail at this time, when our political affairs are fast verging to a great and unavoidable crisis. It is not, however, from any peculiar confidence in my own ideas on this subject, that I address them to you ; but it is because certain facts, rather than opinions, of which I am possessed, ought to be imparted to those whose influence in the community will contribute greatly to preserve its interest and its honour. The two great rivals of Europe, whose ambition so often disturbs the repose of other nations, could not fail to view the United States as an object of great interest to them in all their struggles for power. It is well known that the French, in particular, had determined from the commencement of the present war against England, that we should become their associate, and at some periods they have had

great reason to calculate upon the event. Happily, however, all their attempts to involve us by fraud or by force, have been hitherto baffled: but elevated by their unparalled successes on the land, and irritated by their defeats on the sea, they have long since taken the most outrageous and desperate resolutions against those nations who hold a pacific intercourse with their enemy; they long ago resolved that they would destroy the commerce which any neutral people should presume to carry on with any of the dominions of England. This unprecedented measure is now executing, and if unresisted, will doubtless be followed by others more atrocious.

General Pinckney went from the United States *specially instructed on every subject of dispute which now exists;* his credentials, of which the Directory have a copy, set forth, that the President, "sincerely desirous to maintain that good understanding, which, from the commencement of their alliance, has subsisted between the two nations, and to efface unfavourable impressions, banish suspicions, and restore that cordiality which was at once the evidence and pledge of a friendly union, had judged it expedient to appoint Mr. Pinckney Minister Plenipotentiary, &c." But notwithstanding our minister was thus designated as a *special minister of conciliation,* and such terms were used as might have soothed their pride, the Directory have refused to receive him, and the refusal has been accompanied with indignities. Some of the facts, relative to this business, have been detailed in a letter from Paris, dated Jan. 7th, which has appeared in our newspapers; but, perhaps, it ought *not* to be published that M. De la Croix announced to Mr. Monroe, the determination of the Directory, *not to receive another minister plenipotentiary from the United States, till the grievances of France shall have been redressed.* These grievances are supposed to be those specified by M. Adet, to which our government has already given a complete answer, and by this answer the government must abide. The demands which France makes upon us to violate a solemn treaty with a powerful nation, to repeal just and necessary laws, and to admit a French consular jurisdiction, paramount to our judicial courts, are points that can never be conceded but with the total surrender of independence, and yet these are to be yielded, (if yielded at all) *as preliminary to any discussion of the questions in dispute,* for we are still to learn what further marks of humiliation would be required of us if we were to submit to these. We know the choice of our President was viewed as an interesting object, on which they bestowed all their influence; as this has failed, they are now prepared to embarass the new administration. They rely too, on the exertions of a powerful faction, to oppose, at all hazards, the system which has prevailed through the period of Washington's administration. But whatever may be the success of their operations within our country, it is on our commerce their policy bears with the most force. Viewing our trade as a material prop of British credit, they aim at the destruction of it, in hopes, by that means, to weaken the power of England. If, by their violence and injustice to neutrals, they should make them all their enemies, they would still calculate upon being no great losers, for plunder and contributions would be a valuable consideration to those who have no other revenues; and if in the process a neutral relation becomes disorganized and ruined, it is, of course, a natural ally to

their system, and will, directly or indirectly, add to their strength. It seems, therefore, evident, that neutral nations, and ours especially, must either submit to ruin, or resist it. But if this is the alternative, and we hesitate which to prefer, we are already half undone; for if our indignation is not excited by the wounds which innocence and honour receive, public liberty must soon be lost and private rights will speedily follow. In this delicate conjuncture of affairs, it appears to me necessary that the public mind should be informed and prepared as fast as possible, for the efforts we may be called to make. The country should be roused without being inflamed; and by a dispassionate attention to the public dangers, should be reconciled to additional taxes, and should strengthen the government by additional confidence in the measures it may adopt. What these will be, no man can foretell; but it is not improbable that merchants may be authorized to arm their ships for defence, and that the several frigates which are in forwardness, may be equipped as convoys; that our most valuable seaports may be further fortified, and probably a military force provided to suppress the insurrections of slaves in those places, where the French emissaries or others, shall excite them. But as the preservation or attainment of peace is the only end desired, it is likely that a minister may be always in Europe, authorized to seize any moment to secure that best of blessings. But whatever there may be in these conjectures, it is not to be doubted that the President will never concur, in degrading the country, and still less in relinquishing its independence. On the other hand, the Jacobin plan will be to enfeeble and divide the public sentiment, that nothing may be done; while, in the meantime, commerce will more and more languish under continued depredations; public credit and private credit may be impaired, and from a general impoverishment, distress and despondency must ensue, and what will be the greatest of all evils, France, by the instrumentality of faction, will govern the country at last.

With great respect, I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

G. CABOT.

April 10.

Since writing the foregoing, I am told there are some good people who think it would be wise to send an Envoy Extraordinary to France, it having been suggested that the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary is objected to by the Directory. But I answer, that the rank of the two characters is the same, and is so established by all writers; besides which, Mr. P. is in fact an Envoy Extraordinary for special purposes; and even were it otherwise, and the ranks were different, it would puzzle ingenuity to furnish a reason why they should reject a minister from us of the same grade with the highest they ever sent to us. To this I add, that the Directory have not made the objection; and it must, therefore, be understood that, for the present, France has shut the door of negotiation, expecting, no doubt, that this last step of violence would intimidate our government, and deter them from further defending the rights of our country, or that the people would no longer support their own government.

## FROM OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

SPRINGFIELD, May 14, 1797.

Dear Sir,

Since leaving Philadelphia, I have attended courts in New York, Connecticut, and Vermont, and been in the western parts of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and found everywhere an increased and increasing attachment to the government; and I have no doubt that any measure which, in the present crisis, it may judge expedient to adopt, will have general acquiescence and support from this quarter of the union. All expect that Congress will do something, though there seems to be no settled opinion what that will or ought to be. Probably an embargo till the next meeting of Congress, removable by the President, and accompanied with the trial of a special envoy, would be the most satisfactory. And it may be the best measure that will be found practicable; but of this, your information from the south, and from Europe, must better enable you to judge. Should the idea of an envoy be admitted, may not some able character from the eastward, and Mr. Pinckney, be joined in the commission, with plenary power, however, to either, in the absence of the other.

You certainly, sir, have my best wishes, which is all you can expect from your humble servant,

OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

## FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 15th May, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for the information contained in your letter of the 19th ult., and infer from it, with pleasure, that you must be better, if not quite recovered of the indisposition of which you complained, by your being enabled to write. To know this, however, would give me satisfaction, as I entertain an affectionate regard for you.

Various conjectures have been formed, relative to the causes which have induced the President to convene the Congress at this season of the year; among others, that laying an embargo is supposed by some to be in contemplation; whether with or without foundation, you who are acting on the great theatre, have the best means of judging. For myself, having turned aside from the broad walks of political, into the narrow paths of private life, I shall leave it with those whose duty it is to consider subjects of this sort, (and as every good citizen ought to do) conform to whatsoever the ruling powers shall decide. To make and sell a little flour annually; to repair houses going fast to ruins; to build one for the security of my papers of a public nature, and to amuse myself in agriculture and rural pursuits, will constitute employment for the few years I have to remain on this terrestrial globe. If, to these, I could now and then meet the friends I esteem, it would fill up the measure, and add zest to my enjoyments. But if ever the latter happens, it must be under my own vine and fig tree, as I do not think it probable that I shall ever extend my walks beyond a radius of 20 miles from them.

To detail matters of private concern, would be as improper as it would be uninteresting; and, therefore, upon the principle I have adopted, it will never be in my power to make adequate returns for your kind communications, which I wish may be continued, whenever you are at leisure and liberty, for there is so little dependence on newspaper publications, (which take whatever complexion the editors please to give them) that persons at a distance, and who have no means of information, are oftentimes at a loss to form an opinion on the most important occurrences.

Mrs. Washington and Nelly Custis unite with me in cordial remembrances of Mrs. Wolcott and yourself; and with great truth, I remain, dear sir, your affectionate friend,

GO: WASHINGTON.

## FROM RUFUS KING.

LONDON, March 6, 1797.

(Private.)

Dear Sir,

The Bank of England stopped payment in specie on the 28th ult., and since, all the banks of Great Britain have followed her example, so that gold and silver no longer circulates. Parliament have authorized the bank to emit 20s. and 40s. notes, to supply the place of guineas; they have, likewise, repealed the laws which forbade private individuals to issue notes, payable on demand, for any sum under £5; and the bankers, manufacturers, and projectors, are throwing into circulation among a people, the lower classes of whom are illiterate and liable to be defrauded, all sorts and denominations of small paper money, under the pretence of supplying an equivalent for shillings and sixpenny pieces. Parliament will probably follow these regulations by a law making bank notes receivable in the payment of taxes; and also in the payment of annuities or dividends upon the national debt. The merchants, bankers, and principal manufacturers throughout the country, are associating to circulate bank notes; and the bank which, for some time past, had been sparing in their discounts for the accommodation of the merchants, are now so liberal that those who ask receive. Already bank notes are at a depreciation, which is proved by the reluctance with which every one parts with a guinea; by the sudden rise of exchange, and also by the great demand for American stocks, which have risen within a few days. Bank shares from 103 to 107; 6 per cts. from 80 to 90; 3 per cts. from 49 to 55; while the English 3 per cts. have vibrated between 50 and 52. I see no reason to doubt that our stocks will rise still higher. The house of Barings, who still have on hand the residue of the 6 per cts. that you sent them, and which they have declined, at my instance, selling, will hold them yet longer in expectation of a better price. We shall attend to the market, and when we think the price not likely to increase, shall probably sell; this we are bound to do, as early as convenient, since these gentlemen are actually in advance for more than the amount of all the stocks remitted to them. Col. Humphries, some weeks since, drew on Mr. Parish for 82,281 M. B.'co; and at the same time requested the Messrs. Barings to provide the means of payment, in case Mr. Parish should be without

funds of the United States. Though this house are in advance beyond the value of the funds remaining in their hands, I mentioned to Sir Francis Baring my hope that their house would, notwithstanding their advance, find the means of remitting to Mr. Parish funds to enable him to pay Col. Humphries' draft, in case he should not have been supplied by you with the means of payment. This the Messrs. Barings agreed to do. Col. Humphries supposes that $330,000, appropriated for Barbary purposes by the act of May, 1796, were in the hands of Messrs. Barings; but neither these gentlemen nor myself have any information respecting the same, a circumstance that gave some embarrassment how to act relative to drafts made in reference to that fund, which may be deposited in other hands. Though I have no direct authority or agency in these affairs; yet, as the Messrs. Barings naturally enough suppose it proper to consult me respecting them, I should think my advice of more worth to these gentlemen, and likewise to the public, if I was a little better informed of the arrangements (I mean those relating to pecuniary dispositions) that have been made, or are intended. Should you have occasion to raise money here upon our stocks, I am convinced that you ought not to attempt it upon our 6 per cts., liable to and in the course of a practical redemption. An irredeemable stock, or even a stock redeemable at pleasure, would be preferred. Yours, very sincerely,

RUFUS KING.

France, I fear, will waste our commerce to the extent of her power. The treaty with this country is made the pretence of this injustice. But we lately see that she has required of Hamburgh, and Bremen, and of Denmark, to break off all commerce with Great Britain. These powers have no recent treaty, yet France applies to them the same irregular conduct as she has to us. Hamburgh and Bremen have not yet yielded to her demand; and the refusal of Denmark has originated a sharp diplomatic controversy. The French minister at Hamburgh is recalled.

# CHAPTER XV.

## FIFTH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION.

On the 15th of May, Congress accordingly met. A quorum of both Houses were present. The next day at noon, Mr. Adams delivered his speech in the chamber of the Representatives.

The intelligence that Mr. Pinckney had been actually expelled from France, as has been mentioned, arrived subsequently to his first despatches. In addition, information reached the government of the passage by the Directory of a new decree affecting our commerce. The first event took place the day after the reception at Paris of the news of one of Bonaparte's Italian victories, the second on learning the result of the American presidential election, and known to have been occasioned by that result.

The proof that this last assertion is correct, may be found in a letter from Mr. Joel Barlow, himself a partisan of the Directory, to his brother-in-law, Abraham Baldwin, a member of Congress, written in March of this year, and quoted by Col. Pickering in his report of January 18th, 1799. "When," he says, "the election of Adams was announced here, it produced the order of the 2d of March, which was meant to be little short of a declaration of war." "The government here was determined to fleece you of your property to a sufficient degree to bring you to your feeling in the only nerve in

which it was presumed your sensibility lay, which was your pecuniary interest."

This edict, after reciting some of the previous decrees respecting neutral trade, ordered, that in all cases of maritime prizes, a reference should be made to the minister of justice to determine whether the treaties with the nation to which they belonged were still in force. That with the United States was expressly declared to have been "modified" by their treaty with Great Britain. All merchandise of the enemy, or merchandise not sufficiently ascertained to be neutral, under American flags, was therefore to be confiscated. The articles enumerated in the British treaty as contraband, which had been exempted by the French treaty, were nevertheless declared contraband; every American holding a commission from the enemies of France, as well as every seaman of that nation composing the crew of the vessel, was likewise declared piratical and to be treated as such; and the Directory finally prescribed what papers should be necessary to protect neutral property.

Other and very important intelligence, was that of the financial embarrassments of Great Britain, the stoppage of specie payments by the Bank of England, and the danger apprehended in consequence of the total destruction of her credit and power.

The President's speech, from which extracts of a narrative character have been already given, was dignified and resolute, calculated to rouse the slumbering spirit of the nation, and, were it possible, to infuse union and energy into the councils of their representatives. It expressed his sincere desire for peace, and his intention to renew negotiations to preserve it; but it must be remarked that the animadversions upon the language of M. Barras to Mr. Monroe, and some other passages, just enough in themselves, were hardly a wise initiative to such negotiations,

and, as afterwards proved, were taken in high dudgeon by the French government.

The necessity of providing effectual means of defence against the aggressions which were offered, was strenuously urged by the President upon Congress, and the increase of the navy as a permanent measure; the provision of smaller vessels to serve as convoys, and regulations enabling merchant vessels to arm for their own defence, as temporary measures, recommended.

The greater part of the cruisers whose depredations had been most injurious to our commerce, had been built, and some of them partially equipped, in the United States. Citizens resident abroad, too, had engaged in the same infamous pursuit. Armed with French commissions, and encouraged by authority of law, their piracies had hitherto been committed with impunity, as the means of defence had been denied to American ships lest a collision should ensue with either of the belligerents. Penal laws, to put an end to this pursuit, were also suggested. Other measures recommended by the Executive were: provision for the defence of the seaports; the raising of additional artillery and cavalry; arrangements for forming a provisional army; and the revision of the militia laws.

The message thus concluded:

"The present situation of our country imposes an obligation on all the departments of government to adopt an explicit and decided conduct. In my situation, an exposition of the principles by which my administration will be governed, ought not to be omitted.

"It is impossible to conceal from ourselves or the world, what has been before observed, that endeavours have been employed to foster and establish a division between the government and people of the United States. To investigate the causes which have encouraged this attempt, is not necessary. But to repel, by decided and united councils, insinuations so derogatory to the honour, and exaggerations so dangerous to the constitution, union, and even independence of the nation, is an indispensable duty.

"It must not be permitted to be doubted, whether the United States will support the government established by their voluntary consent, and appointed by their free choice; or whether, by surrendering themselves to the direction of for-

eign and domestic factions, in opposition to their own government, they will forfeit the honourable station they have hitherto maintained.

"For myself, having never been indifferent to what concerned the interests of my country, devoted the best part of my life to obtain and support its independence, and constantly witnessed the patriotism, fidelity, and perseverance of my fellow-citizens on the most trying occasions, it is not for me to hesitate or abandon a cause in which my heart has been so long engaged.

"Convinced that the conduct of the government has been just and impartial to foreign nations; that those internal regulations which have been established by law for the preservation of peace are in their nature proper, and that they have been fairly executed; nothing will ever be done by me to impair the national engagements; to innovate upon principles which have been so deliberately established, or to surrender in any manner the rights of the government. To enable me to maintain this declaration, I rely, under God, with entire confidence on the firm and enlightened support of the national legislature, and upon the virtue and patriotism of my fellow-citizens."

The documents relative to the matters contained in the speech, were transmitted to the House on the day following. Whatever animadversions have been, or may be made upon particular acts of Mr. Adams, and whatever strictures upon his subsequent relations of them, it is due to him to say that all his addresses to Congress were firm and decided in *tone*. He ever recommended active and energetic measures, and appealed to the virtue and patriotism of the legislature for their adoption; to that of the people for their sanction. In some of them, it is true, he unwisely left room for changes of purpose, that were afterwards as unwisely adopted; but his language was fitted to produce a sound and healthy state of public feeling. Though his actions were often ill reconcileable, his sentiments, as publicly expressed, were elevated; and, even when distorted by personal considerations, his intentions were unquestionably directed to the general good. The present address, in its most important object—its influence upon the people—was to some extent successful. The event of the debates on the British treaty, had already manifested that the legislature, however ill disposed themselves, could never resist the decisive expression of the

national will; and it was felt by the President that, in this equally important crisis, the feelings of the people must be first roused. "On the manifestation of these feelings," says Marshall, "he principally relied for the success of the negotiation; and on their real existence he depended for defence of the national rights, should negotiational fail."[a] Its effect in the Senate is noticed by Mr. Jefferson. Speaking of the union which had prevailed there among the federalists, he says: "Towards the close of the last Congress, however, it had been hoped their ties began to loosen, and the phalanx to separate a little. This hope was blasted at the very opening of the present session, by the nature of the appeal which the President made to the nation."[b] But the current had only begun to turn. It needed yet more of insult and outrage, thoroughly to overthrow the power which jacobinism had obtained. The alien press still openly defended the conduct of France; and a party in Congress was still found who could sacrifice national honor and independence to gratify their own ambition and their own hate. True, their influence at home was waning; but its effects were still to exercise a noxious tendency abroad.

The documents from the department of State, accompanying the President's speech, contained the despatches of General Pinckney; portions of Mr. John Q. Adams, correspondence as Minister at the Hague, and the correspondence of the Chevalier de Yrujo, the Spanish Minister. The nature of the first papers has been stated. Mr. J. Q. Adams' letters exhibited the extension of French intrigue to that quarter also, in exciting the Batavian republic to clamor against the British treaty, as a violation of their rights, and in requiring their coöperation to defeat its execution. The Spanish Minister's protests were

[a] Life of Washington, Vol. V. p. 632. [b] Jefferson's Writings, III. 356.

to the same purpose. Additional information on the affairs with Spain, was subsequently transmitted.

The federalists had once more a majority in both Houses, though but a slender one in that of the Representatives. There the election of Speaker resulted in the reëlection of Jonathan Dayton, of New Jersey; whose politics, were now to be considered neutral. The reply to the President's address was carried on the 3d of June. The clauses approving the foreign policy of the government, were warmly opposed; the test vote being fifty-two in their favor, to forty-eight against them. The final vote on the adoption was sixty-two to thirty-eight; some even of the leaders of opposition voting for it. In the Senate the federal majority was larger, standing eighteen to ten, with two wavering votes.

At the end of May, Messrs. Pinckney, Marshall and Dana were nominated to the Senate and approved. Mr. Dana then declining, Mr. Gerry was, on the 20th of June, appointed in his place; his resurrection being thus accomplished by Mr. Adams himself, in default of a more popular manifestation.[a] Touching this gentleman, an extract from Mr. Adams' letters is worth giving, as showing the absurdly exaggerated estimate he put upon his abilities.

"No man had a greater share in propagating and diffusing these prejudices against Mr. Gerry, than Hamilton, whether he had formerly conceived jealousies against him as a rival candidate for the Secretaryship of the Treasury; for Mr. Gerry was a financier, and had been employed for years on the committee on the Treasury in the old Congress, and a most indefatigable member too. That committee had laid the foundation of the present system of the Treasury, and had organized it almost as well; though they had not the assistance of clerks, and other conveniences, as at present. Any man who will look into the journals of the old Congress, may see the organization, and the daily labours and reports of that committee; and may form some judgment of he talents and services of Mr. Gerry in that department. I knew that the officers of the Trea-

[a] Another nomination at this time, was that of Mr. John Quincy Adams, transferred from Lisbon to Berlin. The vacancy of the Hague had been filled on the 1st of March, by the appointment of Mr. William Vans Murray.

sury, in Hamilton's time, dreaded to see him rise in the House upon any question of finance; because they said he was a man of so much influence, that they always feared he would discover some error, or carry some point against them. Or whether he feared that Mr. Gerry would be President of the United States before him, I know not. He was not alone, however. His friends among the heads of departments, and their correspondents in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, sympathised with him very cordially in his hatred of Gerry, and of every other man who had laboured and suffered early in the revolution."[a]

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## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, May 15, 1797.

Sir,

I had the pleasure, on my arrival yesterday, to find my friends in good health. The members of the House are assembling, and a quorum will be formed this forenoon. I presume the former Speaker will be re-elected. We shall oppose the re-election of the Clerk. On the firmness and prudent conduct of the President we may rely. Further overtures of negotiation, in some unexceptionable mode, will be holden out to France, and manly conduct recommended; Our trade protected, and not embargoed; defensive protection adopted. The Spanish minister has exhibited to the government a list of grievances. It is understood to be a formal compliance with the requisitions of France.

I was happy to hear, this morning, your session begins under such favourable auspices. In haste, I am your obedient humble servant,

C. GOODRICH.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

Brookline, May 15, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

Almost all men seem, finally, to expect that an Envoy Extraordinary is to be sent to France, but no one has attempted to show the propriety of such a step, except that its tendency is to unite the country eventually. I had one conversation with Ames upon this subject, in which he supported the measure chiefly upon the ground, that without it, the government could do nothing; and with it, might be brought to prepare for an ultimate efficient defence. After all I have heard, and all I have been able to imagine, my mind is still as unsatisfied as at first. I often ask myself what instructions can be given to the new minister, that will not immediately bring us to issue with France? To say that he shall not enter the republic until a negotiation is promised, is making a point at the outset, which, while Mr. Pinckney remains alone at the door, may possibly be avoided; and yet, I can have no idea of an Envoy being sent on any

[a] Boston Patriot. Letter XIII

other terms. Again, is it possible that an acknowledgement can be made on the part of the United States, that they have done wrong towards France? If they were disposed to make such an acknowledgement in general terms, it would be impossible to point out the particular case. Even our Jacobins are brought to confess that the United States have done nothing which they had not good right to do, but they complain that our government did not forbear to do what, (though right in itself) it must have been known would displease our allies, and so make them quarrel with us, or rather, punish us. Again, can we send a minister without instructing him, when received by the French, to ask of them *some* reparation for all the injuries their agents and servants have done us? If not to these ends, to what does the mission aim?

France is acting as I have seen a cunning knave in private life; first commit the most insufferable injuries, and then take the high ground of complaint. In such a case, no good can come from an act which will place the injured party in the attitude of entreaty, weakness or fear. I still wish it were possible for our country to assume a dignified countenance, and, without provoking hostilities, prepare to repel them. I am well persuaded if we could do this, all would be well. The hope of seducing us within, or coercing us without, would be extinct, and France would not suppose it for her interest to quarrel with us. It cannot be denied that the people wish to avoid new taxes, and especially one upon land; but the rapidity with which the people have come to a right way of thinking on French politics, leads me to believe that almost any measures the government may take, would be approved, and especially if accompanied with an address to the people, explaining the necessity, and pointing to the public danger.

But after all, my greatest reliance is that Great Britain will keep the monster at bay until he destroys himself, or becomes less dangerous to others; and I cannot believe that any vicissitudes in the internal affairs of England will sensibly diminish their naval strength, or divert its application, as long as France remains formidable. England certainly possesses abundant means of every kind to defend herself against France, and as many of the powers on the continent as France can compel to act as auxiliaries. I shall not believe, therefore, until I see it, that England will yield in the present contest. Mr. Erskine, Mr. Waddington, and some thousands of others, will try at every period of misfortune, to displace the ministers; but the government, the landed as well as other property of the nation, the weight of character, and essentially the body of the nation must, and do hate France, and will under all circumstances, fight France as long as they can. Farewell.

G. CABOT.

Tuesday, May 16.

Since writing the preceding, I have received a letter from Mr. King, by which it appears that he considers the late proceedings in England as a fair commencement of a paper money system. It was evident to us all, that if the stoppage of payment in gold and silver were not merely a thing of a day, and resulting from causes in their nature of short duration, a paper currency must take place. But is there any way of managing their unavoidable difficulties, less hazardous?

## TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Philadelphia, May 18, 1797.

I have had the pleasure to receive your favour of May 15, and while I rejoice that you enjoy that repose and tranquillity so richly earned by a life of services and benefits for mankind; the reflection, that he who so long directed public opinion, and whose counsel at this time would possess and deserve universal confidence, is a private citizen, excites mixed emotions which I am unable to describe.

In what concerns public duties at this interesting crisis, all are satisfied, who are friends to our country, that the principles of your administration must be supported. The President's speech to Congress, which I enclose, will prove his conviction how important this principle is esteemed, and the measures which he deems necessary to be pursued. I have just received private letters from London, dated in March. Gold and silver no longer have any general circulation in the British dominions, and the government, as well as private bankers, manufacturers and projectors, are throwing into circulation (among an ignorant people, liable to be defrauded) all sorts of small paper notes, under pretence of supplying the want of shillings and other small money. The Bank of England discounts for paper liberally, and its notes circulate in consequence of a general combination. A present relief is afforded by this delusive opiate, but there are symptoms of an incipient depreciation. General Pinckney was ordered to leave Paris, the day after Buonaparte's last victories were known. He was addressed by the style of the *Anglo American*, by which the citizens of the United States are said to be now distinguished from the French colonists. France has required of Hamburg, Bremen and Denmark, to suspend all commerce with Great Britain. These powers have made no treaties with England during the present war, though our treaty is made the pretext for the aggressions of France. The truth is, France means to destroy Great Britain, by assailing her commerce with all nations. A letter from Col. John Trumbull to me, has these expressions: "The present is the most eventful period of human history, and Europe, in my opinion, is destined, sooner probably than we are aware, to be involved in one vast conflagration; what is past, is but the burning of a single house." I forgot to mention that Spain and Holland have complained of our treaty with England; the Dutch respect this country, but neither the Dutch nor Spaniards have any political will. But though the French are tremendous in Europe, they would be to us a contemptible foe, if we were but united and just to ourselves.

What censure can be too severe upon those who have invited the assaults of a foreign power, and who foster internal divisions!! The situation of those who have any concern with public affairs, is disagreeable; a consciousness of pure intentions, is indeed, almost the only reward now remaining.

Mrs. Wolcott joins me in presenting to yourself, Mrs. Washington, and Miss Custis, her cordial respects. For myself, duty and inclination concur in proffering expressions of the most lasting attachment.

May 20th, 1797.

I embrace the earliest opportunity to transmit a copy of the documents referred to in the President's speech. We hear nothing further that is interesting.

It is remarkable, that all the foreign nations with whom we have public intercourse, bring forward their claims for *gratitude;* even the Spaniard contends for his share.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, May 20, 1797.

Sir,

The President's speech has met with a cordial reception, and followed with the despatches now in the press, will give an irresistible impulse to public opinion. The answers of the two Houses will, I trust, reciprocate the sentiments of the speech. A copy of the one reported to our House, I enclose; as it is a mere draft yet unacted on, I wish it not to go out of your hands so as to get into the press. We don't know what course the French adherents will take. Their plan, heretofore, has been, an envoy, and soothing language towards the republic. Disconcerted, as evidently they are, by the President's speech and the despatches, they have a severe task on hand. If any doubt remained of the interest the French took in our election of a President, none will hereafter of their belief of Mr. Jefferson's being devoted to their views. It is said the choice has occasioned almost as much solicitude in Europe as in this country. We have become an interesting object to Europe. In England, the crisis is extremely alarming in respect to their money operations. The stoppage of payment in specie is probably the commencement of a paper money system, which there, as everywhere else, will disturb the settled relations of property. If we can maintain peace and a settled order of things, we can't fail of respectability.

The letter published in the paper ascribed to Mr. Jefferson,[a] has occasioned much speculation. It is believed he wrote it, and rumours are circulated he admits he did, but says it has been garbled in the translation. As I don't wish to give currency to an anecdote of this kind without undeniable evidence, you will please to consider this as confidential; we shall soon know if it prove true. That, with the manner he is mentioned in the despatches, will place him under a cloud as long as a jesuitical friend of the people can be under a cloud.

John Quincy Adams, the President's son, Resident Minister at the Hague, is nominated as Minister to Prussia. I presume this destination is with reference to the northern powers, as well as Prussia.

There is an accession of good character to the House of Representatives, and as yet we find no cause to despond. The period is critical; we shall, I think, escape without hurt except to our navigation. We received the paper containing your speech, on Wednesday. It is regarded as a valuable acquisition; the President is particularly gratified. I shall place under cover some of the newspa-

[a] That to Mazzei, Jefferson's Writings, III., 328.

pers. Peter Porcupine's gazette goes to my address to Hartford post-office, and is at your command while there, except Mrs. Goodrich has given directions to have it sent to her. If she has not, you will please to do it when you leave Hartford. I lent Col. Wadsworth, Porcupine's works in two volumes; he will hand them to you if you mention it to him.

With affectionate remembrances to Mr. and Mrs. Moseley, I am, sir, your obedient, humble servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

Philadelphia, May 22, 1797.

Sir,

Mine of yesterday's date gave you the draft of an answer to the President's speech, the discussion of which began to-day on an amendment offered by Mr. Nicholas as a substitute. We had expected they would have attempted a softening of the answer without combating the material point of the indignity offered our country by Mr. Pinckney's rejection. It is evident the amendment is brought forward by concert, and will be warmly supported. The enclosed is a copy of it. In point of style and sentiment it is degrading. How mortifying, that for days we must listen to long harangues on so pitiful a proposition! I place under separate covers a printed copy of the public despatches referred to in the President's speech.

We shall be happy to know you have your health amidst the fatiguing attentions of the session, and that its business proceeds satisfactorily. My brother informs me, that Mary Anne concluded that during his stay at Hartford, Porcupine's papers should go under its present address to Hartford to be sent to my father. He will hand them to you, if you request it, before he sends them away to Durham. I am, sir, your obedient, humble servant.

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

Brookline, May 24, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

Your favour of the 17th was received last evening. The President's speech had arrived three days before by way of the Sound. I have yet seen but few people since the speech appeared in a handbill. Judging from these and from my own feelings, this paper, in itself the most truly national, will excite the most national feelings of anything that has been published since the French disease infected our country. To me it seems peculiarly proper that the state legislatures should all declare their determination to co-operate with the federal head, because the measures of France are grounded in part on the idea that we are a divided people. I take it for granted that all the states north of the Potomac, Pennsylvania excepted, will firmly support the system indicated by the President's speech. It is not to be expected that new taxes will be popular, but I fully believe that the persuasion of their necessity and of the reality of our public dangers, will produce a complete acquiescence in them, and that the zeal of

the country for efficient preparations against the mischiefs of France will continually increase.

You may judge of the pleasure we received from the President's speech, when I assure you that after reading and considering it all Sunday afternoon, at my home, a large company of good men all agreed that it was in every particular exactly what they would have wished, and was expressed in a masterly and dignified style. Your affectionate and sincere friend,

G. CABOT.

## URIAH TRACY TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, 27th May, 1797.

Your letter of the 8th instant I received with pleasure, and am gratified with its contents, both with respect to myself, and the sentiments it contains on public affairs. My health is so far improved that I find myself able to attend the duties of my station without injury.

Before this reaches you, the answer of the Senate to the President's speech, and his reply, will be published in your newspapers; otherwise, I should endorse them to you. The answer contains some water gruel, but in substance I hope it will meet the approbation of the friends to government. You will discern in it an attempt to conciliate and reconcile all parties, and you will, at the same time, know that all such attempts have more or less nonsense in them; but in public bodies, some weak but good men depend much on conciliatory measures when they open a session, and at this critical juncture, there seemed to be an uncommon wish to reconcile, and that wish seemed to me to be strong in proportion to the apparent impossibility of effecting it. I acknowledge my own opinion was that if we did reconcile, it must be at the total expense of ourselves, and that all the sacrifice must be on our side, at a time when prompt and decided language and measures were in an uncommon degree necessary, and in pursuance of that idea, you will notice in our answer, one sentence of determination, and about two or three immediately follow of milk and water nothingness; we did not gain a single vote by it, on the paragraph declaring our belief in favour of the impartiality of the Executive and government to foreign nations, &c. We divided on the motion to strike it out, 15 to 11. All the absentees are federalists, and we should have had, in full Senate, 25 to 11. The House of Representatives are still debating on the answer to the President's speech, which was reported by a committee of five. The answer is a very good one, as reported; and the anti-federalists are attempting amendments, for the purpose of giving it the complexion which is to serve as an evidence that the House is under the influence of the *Gallicus Morbus*. It is believed they will not succeed; but that a majority of this House, as well as the Senate, is federal. I hope they will take a vote this day, on the amendment; but fear they will not.

On Monday next, whether the House of Representatives are through with their answer, and ready to proceed to business, or not, the Senate will parcel out to committees all the business which the present exigencies present to us, and

which are within our constitutional reach, (as revenue you know is not) ; and mean to proceed to finish it by bills, and offer them to the consideration of the House. If they will not take the proper measures for defence, &c., it shall be known who refuses. The President has nominated his son, John Quincy Adams, as minister in Prussia. This subject is not yet acted upon in the Senate ; there will be opposition to it. My own conjecture is that it will pass. The king of Prussia, although a great villain, has obtained already, and may probably obtain, a preponderancy in the north of Europe. Whether he may not get at the sea, and become a maritime prince ; or, rather, the nation become a maritime people, is problematical, it is true, but rather probable than otherwise. Our treaty with that nation has expired ; and he has, it is said, wondered why we did not offer a renewal of it ; but the most important consideration is, that the intrigues and intentions of the French can now, better be learnt there than at the Hague, or any other court. In our present situation with France, it has become an object of consequence to keep a steady eye on that intriguing, insidious, and convulsed government and people. It is believed that John Q. Adams, placed at Berlin, can do us much service, as he is unquestionably the most intelligent, and at the same time most industrious man, we have ever employed in a diplomatic capacity. You will hear much of an Envoy Extraordinary being sent to France, and that Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Madison must be the man, &c. My own conjectures on this subject follow. No jacobin, or enemy to the last or former administration, or even *lukewarm* friend, will be trusted with this business; and were it not that so many good friends to the government, and very reputable characters, are constantly pouring in upon us their wishes and prayers, that some person or persons should be sent from the United States to join Mr. Pinckney, as a commission to treat with the French government, I am convinced that all our negotiations would be the investiture of Gen. Pinckney with the powers of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. But the numerous and incessant applications for an envoy, or something like it, to be sent from this country, I think will prevail on the Executive thus far, that General Pinckney be placed at the head of a commission, and one or two gentlemen be joined with him ; that they take a stand at the Hague, Amsterdam, Hamburg, or some other neutral country, and through a proper channel let the French government know that they are authorized to treat with them on our demands as well as theirs, in a manner suited to the dignity of an injured, but cool and reasonable nation, as we call ourselves, at any time or place that the French government shall point out.

It is believed that Judge Dana, of Massachusetts, or John Marshall, of Virginia, or perhaps both, will be thought of for this appointment. But one circumstance will be a pole star to this proceeding : that no person will be sent on this business but a decided federalist. In the meantime the object of friends to government is, that our revenue is to be increased, either by direct or indirect taxes, and that a system of defence is to be adopted somewhat similar to that recommended in the President's speech. This will depend in some measure on the House of Representatives, you know ; but I venture to say, that the gentlemen will have to stay here till they sweat with hot weather as well as anger, if they do not readily adopt some such salutary measures, and especially if they are

hesitating about an increase of revenue; for, although the Senate cannot originate a revenue bill, it is very clearly remembered by us that the House cannot adjourn, but for the space of three days, without our consent. This may look too much like a threat; but, sir, it must be remembered that desperate cases require desperate remedies. I am, however, of opinion that a clear majority of the Representatives is federal. You will readily see that this letter is private and confidential, and not meant for public inspection.

I congratulate you, sir, on your late appointment, as governor of the state, and permit me also to return you also my most sincere thanks, for the speech you made at the opening of the session. It has met the cordial reception and approbation of every friend to order and government, here, and throughout the union, where it has reached the public eye. I presume you will go through the session with the same steady view to order and propriety, which usually marked the legislature of Connecticut; though I must own to you, on looking over your list of representatives, I was struck with more than a common number of weak and jacobinical characters. In this I may be, and hope I am mistaken.

The affairs of Europe wear no other aspect than war and confusion, and the present campaign will probably be severe and bloody. The English are in a singular condition, and an attempt to shake off the public debt may be successful in this state of external pressure, which seems to place the nations in a posture to barter away pecuniary considerations for existence. The emperor Paul, of Russia, will now act unequivocally, to check the king of Prussia from an active interference in favour of the French; and likewise to prevent a dismemberment of the Germanic Body. How much may be expected from the one third of the French Legislature and one fifth of the Directory, which were created in March, is uncertain; but we may be tolerably secure in believing nothing worse can happen from it. Indeed the French affairs have a long time afforded a security against the dread of innovation and change, as the result could hardly effect anything but amelioration.

I have been led imperceptibly to a length in this letter which I hope may not fatigue you too much; though I am sensible it may need an apology. The best I can make is to relieve you, by saying, I am, with due consideration and great respect, your humble servant.

URIAH TRACY.

## FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 29th May, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter of the 18th instant, with its enclosures, and thank you for both.

The President has, in my opinion, placed matters upon their true ground, in his last speech to Congress, The crisis calls for an unequivocal expression of the public mind, and the speech will, mediately or immediately, bring this about. Things ought not, indeed, cannot remain longer in their present state, and it is time the people should be thoroughly acquainted with the political situation of

this country, and the causes which have produced it, that they may either give active and effectual support to those to whom they have entrusted the administration of the government, (if they approve the principles on which they have acted) or sanction the conduct of their opposers, who have endeavoured to bring about a change by embarrassing all its measures, not even short of foreign means. We are waiting with no small degree of solicitude for the answer of the House of Representatives, that an opinion may be formed from its complexion of the temper of that body, since its renovation.

Thus much for our own affairs, which, maugre the desolating scenes of Europe, might continue in the most happy, flourishing and prosperous train, if harmony of the union was not endangered by the internal disturbers of its peace. With respect to the nations of Europe, their situation appears so awful, that nothing short of Omnipotence can predict the issue, although every humane mind must feel for the miseries they endure. Our course is plain; those who run may read it. Theirs is so bewildered and dark, so entangled and embarrassed, and so obviously under the influence of intrigue, that one would suppose if any thing could open the eyes of our misled citizens, the deplorable situation of those people could not fail to accomplish it.

* * * *

With sincere and affectionate regard, I am always yours,

GO: WASHINGTON.

## FROM OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

BOSTON, May 29, 1797.

Dear Sir,

Since writing you from Springfield, I have attended court at Portsmouth, and have now been some days at this place. The President's speech is well received by both Houses, and we expect will do much good at home and abroad. I repeat that neither Congress or the Executive need hesitate about any proper measures, from an apprehension that public opinion and spirit will not support them. There is still, however, such diversity of opinion among the best of men, as to the measures expedient to be taken, that I can give no useful information on that point, and perhaps went too far in the conjecture I hazarded in my former letter.

Truly yours,

OLIVER ELLSWORTH.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

BROOKLINE, May 31, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

If it were doubtful whether the government could give a tone to the nation, I think the effect of the speech is a proof of its truth. All the federalists and many others approve highly the style he has used, and swear to support him. Still, however, we look with anxiety for the address of the House as it shall finally pass, for if the Representatives fall off, they will be followed by many of the people.

Our legislature assembles this day, and it is expected that they will evince their coincidence of opinion with the President. With a hope to stimulate them to this proper conduct, I threw into the Centinel of this date, a piece signed "One of the American People." When this is done, I shall hope you will think my apostleship may be suspended, as no longer necessary; and I hope you will be persuaded that I have faithfully executed the trust. We are told, and I believe it to be true, that our eastern district will send a recruit to the federal party, by electing Parker instead of Dearborn.

Brother Ellsworth, a few days since, made us a friendly visit of three or four hours, and gave us a more realizing view of your family than we had enjoyed for a long time. We are to see him again to-morrow evening. He perceives with some triumph, that my political faith has been a little strengthened by the manifestations of right temper among the people, since the publication of the speech. If Congress should be disposed to do all that they ought, I trust that they will rescue us from the continued disgrace of starving our public officers; and when this happens, I shall hope you will have it in your power to draw every good man you need as an auxiliary in your departments; and that you will no longer delay to expel a commissioned traitor. Expectation has been alive since the appearance of an infamous letter, as it is called; but, for my own part, whether the letter was written by the person to whom it is imputed, or not, I should always have believed that the sentiments are precisely those he maintains; and, indeed, the attack he made publicly upon Adams, in his note to a printer, was no less scandalous. In all these things, I devoutly acknowledge the hand of Providence; and if I could be persuaded that we deserve these kind interferences, I could be as easy as some of our friends.

G. CABOT.

## TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 31st, 1797.

* * * *

The House have not agreed on a reply to the President's speech. It is certain that there is a small majority favourably disposed to the measures of the government. The opposition are driving to effect two points.

1st. An indirect disapprobation of past measures.

2d. An intimation that the operation of existing treaties is favourable to France.

It is not difficult to see that the drift of the leading men is to criminate this country and justify France.

From present appearances, it is probable that Mr. Dayton and some neutral characters will incorporate into the address an *incorrect*, though perhaps *not a very important* amendment. The President's speech is, so far as I am informed, generally approved; the Senate appears to be firm. All the matters recommended are referred to committees, except that respecting further revenue. We

have nothing from Europe since I wrote last, except that Cadiz is closely blockaded by a British fleet.

## CHAUNCEY GOODRICH TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Philadelphia, June 1st, 1797.

Sir,

The account we have from your son of your indisposition makes us anxious to hear of your recovery, which we pray God may soon take place.

If we have any of the good qualities of public bodies, we share very many of its bad ones. Nicholas' amendment to the answer has been rejected in a committee of the whole, under the patronage of the Speaker; that part of it relative to equalizing treaties, differently modified, was yesterday carried. We have an unmanageable floating neutral character, that will go over too often to the wrong side. I think, however, we have no cause to despair of carrying the most effectual measures.

The President has nominated Mr. Pinckney, the rejected minister, Judge Dana of Massachusetts, and John Marshall of Virginia, commissioners to treat with the French Republic. Accept my wishes for the return of your health, and the sentiments of respect, of your obedient servant,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Phila. June 3d, 1797.

Congress have done no business of consequence; the Senate has referred to committees the measures recommended by the President, except that of revenue. The House has agreed upon an address, which is firm and proper, except in one point, which has reference to the terms of negotiation with France. It will not be easy to cure the Representatives of the disposition to make treaties.

The last news from Europe is most important. The empire of Germany will, I think, be brought to accede to such terms as France may choose to impose.

## FROM JAMES IREDELL.

Richmond, June 5, 1797.

Dear Sir,

Having obtained here the inclosed bill for your friend Mr. Ellsworth, from Mr. David Meede Randolph, who had been so obliging as to sell a chair and pair of horses for him, I hope you will excuse the liberty I take in committing it to your care on his behalf, knowing the friendship and intimacy existing between you. It will give me satisfaction to know that the bill arrived safely, and that you excuse the trouble I have given you. The President's speech was received here with the highest admiration in general, and even by some warm opponents of the government with their approbation. I believe the French fever is abating

in the country, but it is still much higher than I could wish. I have not, however, met a man who approves of the palliations of the insults of the Directory, attempted by some members of Congress. The attempts were not judicious, and perhaps they were not unfortunate, as they show in a strong point of view the dangerous infatuation which has prevailed. We wait with patience for the vote on the address. Mr. Otis' speech has excited nearly as warm emotions as Mr. Ames' celebrated one, on the treaty. It does indeed the highest honour to his patriotism, abilities and eloquence, and I confess, much as I expected from him, far exceeded my expectations. I expect to be at Edenton in a few days. Be pleased to present my very respectful compliments to Mrs. Wolcott. I hope this letter will find you all well, and am, with great respect, dear sir, your faithful and obedient servant,

JA. IREDELL.

It will be perceived from the following letters from Mr. Hamilton, that he considered a house tax and an extension of the internal taxes, more expedient under then existing circumstances than a direct tax. Wolcott's letters to him, referred to in that of June 8th, are lost.

FROM ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

[New York] June 6, [1797.]

My Dear Sir,

You some time ago put a question to me which, through hurry, I never answered, viz: whether there can be any distinction between the provision in the treaty with Great Britain, respecting *British debts* and that respecting *spoliations*, as to the power of the commissioners to rejudge the decisions of the courts; I answer that I can discover none.

I am of opinion, however, that in the exercise of this power two principles ought to be strenuously insisted upon. One that the commissioners ought not to intermeddle, but when it is unequivocally ascertained that justice cannot now be obtained through our courts; the other, that there ought to be no revision of the question of interest where abatements were made by juries undirected by any special statutes. For it is certain that interest is capable of being affected by circumstances, and that the law leaves a considerable discretion on this point with juries. I take it for granted also, that where compromises were made between creditor and debtor without the intervention of courts, or the injunctions of positive law, there will be no revision. This is all a very delicate subject, one upon which great moderation on the part of the British commissioners is very important to future harmony.

I like very well the course of Executive conduct in regard to the controversy with France, and I like the answer of the Senate to the President's speech; but I confess I have not been well satisfied with the answer reported in the House. It contains too many hard expressions; and hard words are very rarely useful in

public proceedings. Mr. Jay and other friends here, have been struck in the same manner with myself. We shall not regret to see the answer softened down. *Real firmness* is good for everything. *Strut* is good for nothing.

Last session I sent Sedgwick, with request to communicate it to you, my proposal of a building tax. Inclosed is the rough sketch. I do not know whether there was any alteration in the copy I sent to him. But the more I reflect, the more I become convinced that some such plan ought to be adopted, and the idea of valuation dropped, and I have also become convinced that the idea of a tax on lands ought to be deferred. The building tax can be accommodated to the quota rule. For what were intended as rates, may be considered as ratios only of each individual tax, and then, as the aggregate of these ratios within a State, is to the sum of the ratios on a particular building, so will the sum to be raised in the State be to the sum to be paid by the owner of that building; and so the very bad business of valuations may be avoided in general. In regard to stores, if they are comprehended, rents or valuations may be adopted, and these rents may also be represented by ratios, equivalent to the proposition of the specific ratios to the rents of houses, to be estimated in the law.

If these ideas are not clear, I will, on your desire, give a further explanation.

My plan of ways and means, then, for the present, would be—

| | |
|---|---|
| A tax on buildings, equal to - - - - - | $1,000,000 |
| A tax on Stamps, including a small per centage on policies of Insurance; a per centage on collateral successions; a duty on Perfumeries; a duty on Hats, say 5 per cent. for the commonest kind; 10 for the middling, and 20 for the best, to be described by the material, - - - - - | 500,000 |
| On saddle horses, —— dollars per horse, - - - - | 150,000 |
| On Salt, so much as will make the *whole* duty 25 cts., suppose . | 350,000 |
| | $2,000,000 |

I should like, also, a remodification of the duties on licenses to sell spirituous liquors by multiplying discriminations. I would then open a loan for 500,000 of dollars, to be repaid absolutely within five years, upon which I would allow a high interest, say 8 per cent., payable quarterly, and redeemable *at pleasure*, by paying off, and I would accept subscriptions as low as $100. In case of pressure, treasury bills having a like interest, may be used.

If, unfortunately, war breaks out, then every practicable object of taxation should at once [be resorted to,] so as to carry our revenue, in the first instance, to the extent of our ability. Nor is the field narrow.

I give you my ideas full gallop, and without arrangement of expression. I hope you always understand me aright, and receive my communications as they are intended, in the spirit of friendly frankness. Yours, very truly, A. H.

The following is the sketch inclosed in the foregoing letter:

[Copy.]

A million of dollars per annum, to be raised on buildings and lands, on the following plan:

1. Upon inhabited dwelling houses, thus: [a]

Upon every such house of the denomination and description of a log house, at the rate of 20 cents for each room or apartment thereof, exclusive of garret and cellar.

Upon every other inhabited dwelling house of two rooms or apartments, exclusive of halls or entries, garrets and cellars, at the rate of 25 cents for each room or apartment.

Upon every such house of three rooms or apartments, exclusive as before, at the rate of 33 1-3 cents for each room or apartment.

Upon every such house of four rooms, exclusive as before, at the rate of 40 cents for each room or apartment.

Upon every such house of five rooms, exclusive as before, at the rate of 60 cents for each room or apartment.

Upon every such house of six rooms, exclusive as before, at the rate of 75 cents for each room or apartment thereof.

Upon every such house of seven rooms and upwards, at the rate of 100 cents for each room, &c.

Upon every room in a garret or cellar of a house of the foregoing descriptions, having a fire-place, and upon any kitchen, whether in a cellar or adjacent building, at the rate of 20 cents for each room or kitchen.

Upon each room or apartment of every such house, painted inside, the further sum of 25 cents.

Upon each room or apartment of every such house, papered inside, or painted and bordered with paper, the further sum of 50 cents.

Upon every chimney, faced with tiles or cut stone, other than marble, the further sum of 50 cents.

Upon every chimney faced with marble, the further sum of 100 cents.

Upon every stair-case of cedar or ebony wood, the further sum of 100 cents.

Upon every stair-case of mahogany wood, the further sum of 100 cents.

Upon every room or apartment with stucco cornishes, the further sum of 100 cents.

Upon every room with a stucco ceiling, the further sum of 200 cents; but the same room shall not also be rated for cornishes of such work.

Upon every such house with pillars or pilasters outside, in front, the further sum of 100 cents.

Upon every such house faced outside and in front, in whole or in part, with marble, the further sum of 200 cents.

These rates to be paid by the occupiers of the house, whether owners or tenants.

When a house is let by parcels, the landlord to be deemed the occupier.

[a] "*Remarks.*—These rates have been adjusted by applying their operation to a number of houses, from which it appears that they find a sufficiently exact proportion to the rest, and they avoid the expense and uncertainty of valuation. Other circumstances of discrimination, if thought advised, may be added."

Upon all stone houses, not being parts of dwelling houses in use, at the rate of one-fortieth part of the yearly value, to be determined by the actual rent, if rented; if not, by an estimate or valuation thereof.

Upon all grist mills at the rate of 125 cents for each run of stones therein.

Upon all saw mills, at the rate of 50 cents for each saw usually worked therein, not exceeding three; and for each saw above that number, 25 cents.

Upon all wharves in the cities and towns of Portsmouth, Boston, &c., (enumerating the principal towns), at the rate of 12 1-2 cents for each foot in front thereof. [a]

Upon all wharves in any other city or town, at the rate of 6 cents.

Upon all lumber yards in the cities or towns of Portsmouth, Boston, &c., (enumerating the principal towns), at the rate of 2 1-2 cents for each hundred square feet.

Cottages inhabited by paupers to be excepted. To be judged of and ascertained by the assessors hereinafter described.

The amount of the foregoing taxes in each State to be ascertained within a time to be limited by law for that purpose by the assessors, and a report thereof to be made to the Treasury, which shall then proceed to apportion according to the prescribed quota, the sum remaining to make up the million of dollars to be levied.

For example, suppose there were five States, and the product of the house tax of each as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| [A. | $100,000 |
| B. | 150,000 |
| C. | 200,000 |
| D. | 50,000 |
| E. | 100,000 |
| | $600,000 |

There would then remain towards the million to be levied on lands, $400,000. Let there be then assigned to each State, so much in land tax as together with its house tax, will equal the [required amount.] [b]

[New York,] June 8th, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I have received your two letters of the 6th and 7th. The last announces to me no more than I feared. Nor do I believe any sufficient external impulse can be given to save us from disgrace. This, however, will be thought of.

I regret that you appear remote from the idea of a house tax, simply, without

[a] "*Remarks.*—Or this may be thrown into more classes."

[b] "*Remarks.*—The mode of ascertaining to be by an actual calling at each house, and receiving of the occupiers a list of the particulars which are criterions of the tax; the officer to have power to administer an oath. A proper penalty to be annexed to misrepresentation, and a power to be given upon cause of suspicion, testified on oath, to issue a warrant to inspect the house for ascertaining the fact. This will reconcile the idea of the sanctity of the *castle* with the security of the revenue."

The remainder of this paper, if any is missing.

combining the land. I do not differ from your general principle. The truth is a solid one, that the sound state of the political economy depends in a great degree on a general repartition of taxes on taxable property, by some equal rule. But it is very important to relax in theory, so as to accomplish as much as may be practicable. I despair of a general land tax without actual war. I fear the idea of it keeps men back from the augmentation of revenue by other means which they might be willing to adopt. The idea of a house tax alone, is not so formidable. If placed upon a footing which would evince practicability and moderation in the sum, I think it might succeed. Now, 1,000,000 of dollars, computing the number of houses at 600,000, would be an average of about a dollar and a half. The tax would be very low on the worst houses, and could not be high on the best. This idea would smooth a great deal. As to the circumstances of the habitations of the southern negroes, I see no insuperable difficulty in applying ratios to them, which would tend to individual equity; as, between the States the quota principle would make this point unimportant. As to the inequality in certain States, I believe on the plan suggested, there would be no general tax which in fact would operate more equally. The idea of equalization by embracing lands, does not much engage my confidence. Besides that, this may be an after object, and we are to gain points successively.

As to the productiveness of the stamp tax with the items I suggest, it is difficult in the first instance, to judge. But I am persuaded it would go far toward the point aimed at. There cannot be much fewer than 3,000,000 of hats consumed in a year, in this country; at an average of 8 cents per hat, this would be $240,000, a large proportion of $500,000. If law proceedings can be included directly or indirectly, the produce will be very considerable. I think you mistake, when you say these taxes in England are inconsiderable in proportion. According to my recollection, the reverse is the truth. Adieu. Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

## TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 15th, 1797.

* * * *

We have not much other news than appears in the papers, of national importance.

Germany is disorganized, and the affairs of England appear to be tending to some eventful crisis. The French depredations on our commerce in Europe are increasing. By annulling the validity of passports granted by our ministers, it is intended to prevent our citizens from going to France to pursue their claims. Some of the French cruisers have treated our people with extreme barbarity. Instances have happened of men being tortured with thumb-screws, to induce declarations injurious to their employers. Congress will do but little this session; as the danger increases, a disposition to inaction appears, unfortunately, to prevail.

Mrs. Wolcott joins me in presenting her most respectful regards to yourself, Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Phila. July 4th, 1797.

Congress will do little more than to increase the revenue by additional duties on licenses to retailers, and a new duty on stamped papers. Perhaps a new duty on salt will be passed.

The prospect of an adjustment of our dispute with France is not so favourable as it has lately been. The faction in this country becomes more daring. There can be no doubt that the leaders rely on foreign support. As France approaches towards peace in Europe, she advances in her threats and insolence to America. Our western frontiers are threatened with a new Indian war. French and Spanish emissaries swarm through the country. There is reason to believe that a western or ultra-montane republic is meditated. A letter from Mr. Blount, a Senator from Tennessee, has been detected, which discloses a plan for exciting the Indians to hostility upon an extensive scale. It is certain that overtures have been made to the British government for support, and there is every reason to believe, short of positive proof, that similar overtures have been made to Spain and France. The British will not now support the project. The advance made by our people, shews, however, the profligacy of our patriots and the precarious tenure by which the western country is attached to the existing government.

## FROM GEORGE CABOT.

Brookline, June 27, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

I have just returned from a circuitous journey of 400 miles, which has occupied 17 or 18 days. Your favour of the 8th I found upon my table, at my arrival here. In passing up the Merrimack and down the Connecticut, 150 miles on each river, I found the people every where entertaining more just sentiments of our political affairs than I had conceived possible, after so much pains had been taken to mislead them. At Concord I was in the House of Representatives, when the address in answer to Governor Gilman's speech was discussed; and I can assure you, I never saw in any assembly, so much of the right sort of American spirit. Of 131 members, there were not more than 4 or 5 tainted with Jacobinism; and although 20 voted against the address, yet most of these acted upon the the principle of accommodating the 4 or 5 who professed to desire only a little less force in the expression of what all agreed was the public sentiment. In the upper House, there was union and spirit; and I am persuaded that 19-20ths of these men would have marched with Governor Gilman at their head, upon a moment's call, to defend the country and its government against France, as Stark and his followers did to repel the British in 1777. When I came into Vermont, I found the same temper and spirit, so that I could not forbear to conclude, that the disaffection in Boston and its vicinity, is almost all that exists in New England; for I consider the paltry opposition of Portsmouth as only sufficient to blow the fire of patriotism in the rest of the State of New Hampshire.

I have seen by the newspapers that Ames was nominated for a fifth Commissioner. I should have mentioned him with the first men, if I had not considered his health as a total disqualification. I had just visited him, and he appeared too feeble to attend to business of any sort.

We resist the French successfully in our own country, but they beat us in Europe. If England *revolves*, our tranquillity must be disturbed; but I still hope and confide, that England in every supposable condition, will command the ferry, and that interest and pride will always stimulate her to keep the French boats from passing. Your unfeigned friend,

G. CABOT.

## FROM COL. JOHN TRUMBULL.

No. 29 Berners Street, London, April 9th, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I had the pleasure to write you a few lines on the 2d March, by the William Penn. The general aspect of affairs is less favourable to this country and her ally, the Emperor, than at any former period. Another series of victories, more extraordinary than the former, has marked the progress of the French armies, on the side of Italy. A few days gave them possession of the Tyrol, the strongest country in Europe, except Switzerland. There remain no strong towns between them and Vienna, a distance of one hundred and twenty miles; and the troops who can be opposed to these victorious veterans are raw; so that there is little prospect that anything but an immediate peace can prevent their reaching the enemy's capitol. In this situation, advantageous terms have been proposed to the Emperor, to engage him to conclude a separate peace; and he has refused to negotiate except in conjunction with his ally, and for a general peace. In consequence of these circumstances, Mr. Hammond left London a few days ago or Vienna, charged to co-operate on the part of this country in negotiations for a general peace. I hope he will have better success than Lord Malmesbury had. There are those, however, who doubt the wish or intention of France to be at peace with England, on any terms, at present. There are those among the French politicians, who apprehend that a continued depression of their own manufactures, would be the consequence of peace with England, and of the facility which would then exist of introducing British goods; and who, seeing to what height industry, well exerted in agriculture and manufactures, has raised this island, in defiance of the natural obstacles of soil and climate, are willing that the dominion of the ocean, and the benefits of foreign commerce should rest where they are; until, having principally disbanded their armies, in consequence of peace with their continental neighbours, the government shall have had time to become consolidated, and to establish and assure domestic tranquillity and order; and the people to re-establish agriculture and improve manufactures, thus forming a solid basis on which to found a future foreign commerce, and the power and means of distant exertions.

The letters of the American Commissioners to the Secretary of State, of this date

will inform you of the progress made in their labours. A few days more will complete what cases are in a state to come before the Board at present. In their letters, the Commissioners mention a circumstance respecting Mr. Samuel Cabot, whose services here are of more importance than was meditated when he was appointed. The expense of living here is so exorbitant, that it is impossible there should remain much, if anything, from his salary, for his family in America, after his own necessary and inevitable expenses are paid; the salary alone is, therefore, not an object which a prudent man with a large family, and capable of business, can long think worth his attention; and if any prospect of a more advantageous establishment should tempt him to leave this situation, I am afraid it would not be easy to replace him. I should therefore think it wise in the government to permit him to enjoy the sum allowed in each case, in addition to his salary. And I must remark, that a little want of knowledge or attention in a person entrusted with similar business, would soon occasion losses which would overbalance the additional reward. I am, dear sir, most sincerely your friend and servant,

JNO. TRUMBULL.

## FROM RUFUS KING.

LONDON, April 14, 1797.

Dear Sir,

When I last had the pleasure of writing to you, I informed you of the sudden and considerable rise in the price of our stocks in this market. It then seemed probable that they would rise still higher; but after a few days of alarm that followed the stoppage of the specie payments of the bank, the demand for our funds abated, and they have for some days been at nearly the same low price at which they stood before the bank stopped. I am quite at a loss to predict the consequence of this unfortunate event: it is certain that the alarm which immediately followed has very essentially diminished; and the very great efforts made to obtain specie from abroad, lead many to believe that the bank will again soon be in a condition to resume its former course of payments. This it will be enabled to do, in case their late emissions of bank paper are as considerable as some intelligent people suppose.

I understand from Sir F. Baring, that their house disposed of 60 or 80,000 dollars of the 6 per cts. in their hands, before they fell in price; it is probable they would have sold the whole, if they could have obtained 70 per ct.

The British 3 per cts. have been as low as 48; they are now at 50, having risen within a day or two, in consequence of Mr. Hammond's departure for Vienna, to renew, in conjunction with the Emperor, the negotiation for peace. Mr. Pitt will make another loan, for probably 16 millions; and in case the endeavour to conclude the war fails, it would be rashness to pretend that the bank could resume its operations in specie, or that the stocks can hold even their present unexampled prices. Farewell. Yours very sincerely,

RUFUS KING.

P. S. I am very anxious to be informed what course Mr. Adams will adopt concerning France. I hope, and indeed I feel persuaded that, notwithstanding the injuries we receive, we shall not consent to any step that shall involve us in the war. I am deeply convinced that our duty and interest require that we should remain at peace.

The peace concluded between France and Spain, had given an opportunity to the latter country to add to the annoyances suffered by the United States. Notwithstanding her recent treaty, she delayed, on frivolous pretexts, the settlement of the boundary and the surrender of the posts, and commenced depredations on our commerce. Similar claims were set up by her, to those advanced by France, as to the construction of treaty articles, and the laws of nations—a course of conduct to which she had been stimulated by the Directory. Unfortunately, a more plausible excuse was at length found, for the detention of the posts, in the rumor of an intended invasion of the Spanish territory, by the British from Canada. The report was false indeed; Mr. Liston expressly disclaiming on part of his government, any such intended violation of the neutral territory of the United States; that an attempt had been made to draw this government into such a scheme, and that he had been approached with reference to it, he frankly admitted. During the summer, a letter was detected from William Blount, a Senator in Congress from the State of Tennessee, which developed, to some extent, the character of the plot, as well as the persons concerned in it. But as regarded Spain, this excuse for the non execution of the treaty, was but an after thought; a cover for the actual motive of her conduct. That motive was betrayed by the Baron Carondelet, the Governor of the Natchez, in one of his proclamations. It was the expectation of an "immediate rupture between France, the intimate ally of Spain, and the United States."

These disputes extended through this summer; and were, as well as in the succeeding session, the object of

special messages to Congress. Among the documents accompanying that of the 3rd of July, the letter of Mr. Blount was included. This letter was written to Carey, the government interpreter of the Creeks and Cherokees, and bore date the 21st of April preceeding. It discovered the design of uniting those tribes, for some object obscurely hinted at; but which, from the context, appeared to be a movement against the Spanish territories. Carey was to be the instrument of destroying the influence of the government agents with the Indians, and of establishing that of Blount. The assistance of the British was expected, in the contemplated project; and the letter mentioned that a person of consequence had been sent to England on the business. Blount himself, was to have the management of it, under the direction of that government.

Blount was heard by counsel, at his request; but declined answering as to the authenticity of the letter. This being proved, by testimony as to the hand writing and signature, the House immediately caused him to be impeached before the Senate, and demanded that he be sequestered from his seat, until articles should be exhibited against him. This was done; and on the 8th day of July he was expelled from the Senate, by a vote of twenty-five to one, and held in a recognizance to appear and answer the charges of the House. The recognizance was forfeited. Proceedings on the impeachment were subsequently taken, and articles exhibited; but it was decided by the Senate that their jurisdiction was terminated by his expulsion. Had the Senator from Tennessee been a member of the federal party, much capital would doubtless have been made out of his misconduct, as corroborating the standing charges of British influence. He was, however, a "republican;" one whose vote had always been found, on party questions, among the opponents of the administration.

On the 22d of June the President sent to Congress a report from the state department, on the depredations committed by foreign nations upon American commerce, since October, 1796. It appeared from this document, that but few seizures had been made by the English, and that for these the means of redress were provided. Captures by Spanish privateers were becoming numerous, but of those by the French, the schedule exhibited 308, which had been ascertained within that time. Some of these had been attended with great barbarities. Vessels had been wantonly burnt or fired into, even torture applied to the masters to compel false statements of ownership. The crews were confined with prisoners of war of other nations, and subjected to the most dreadful sufferings.

The depredations were by no means restricted to the subjects of the decrees. The very Commissaries of the Directory seized cargoes of provisions for the use of government, without compensation. A system of universal bribery and corruption pervaded the courts, where the judges themselves were often owners of the privateers, and the Minister of Justice, the notorious Merlin, was openly feed by the captors, to procure the ratification of their decisions. The most frivolous pretexts were sufficient to procure confiscation, and when these were wanting, delay, imprisonment, and persecution, drove the master to sacrifice or abandon his cargo to avoid greater misfortune. The same violence and dishonesty extended from the heads of the Directory, to the lowest janissaries of the public offices.

The United States, though the most valuable, were by no means the only objects of French aggression. All the nations of Europe who had refused to enter into the war against England, were involved in the same fate. The northern powers, under threats of vengeance, were ordered to close their ports to her commerce. The nations

who were in alliance with France, were still more unfortunate. Slaves of a relentless master, they were not only ruined themselves, but employed to accomplish the destruction of others. The picture of the sister republic, even as drawn by the pencil of Ames, fell short in its deformity of the terrible original. "It is the only state," he says, "in which the sword is the only trade. Commerce has not a single ship; arts and manufactures exist in ruins and memory only; credit is a spectre which haunts its burial place; justice has fallen on its own sword; and liberty, after being sold to Ishmaelites, is stripped of its bloody garments to disguise its robbers. A people, vain enough to be satisfied with the name of liberty, are called free, and the fervors of its spirit are roused to bind other nations in chains."[a] And yet, France still found its defenders in the national councils, men, who, regretting these things as private misfortunes, yet saw in them but the natural consequences of federal policy; consequences which they had long since predicted; which sprang from the just indignation of a generous and high-spirited nation, at American ingratitude and treachery; and these men were called patriots.

The measures taken during the session were generally considered by the more decided of the federal party, as wanting in the promptness and energy which were requisite to convince the French government of the determination of the United States, in case of the failure of the negotiation, as well as insufficient preparations against the occurrence of so probable an emergency. There was an unwillingness and hesitation in their action, ill calculated to produce a salutary impression. The business accomplished towards its close was somewhat more important, and many of the President's suggestions were finally adopted. Among the acts passed, were the act to pre-

[a] Ames' Works, p. 186.

vent citizens of the United States from privateering against nations in amity with, or against citizens of the United States; the act prohibiting, for a limited time, the exportation of arms and ammunition, and for encouraging the importation thereof; acts to provide for the further defence of the posts and harbors of the United States; to authorize a detachment from the militia, in case of necessity; and to provide for the equipment of three frigates. Those of a fiscal nature were the act laying duties on stamped vellum, parchment and paper; that imposing an additional duty on salt imported into the United States, &c.; authorizing a loan of $800,000, at six per cent, and making additional appropriations for the support of government for the year 1797. The stamp act, though a very necessary one, as a certain means of raising money, had the misfortune of being exceedingly unpopular; certain disagreeable associations being connected with the name, which gave a handle to the opposition to work upon those who did not understand the relations between taxation and representation. It also, curiously enough, furnished a cause of jealousy to the President, who, from some reason, supposed it to exalt the powers of the Secretary of the Treasury at his expense. Upon the greater part of these subjects, some members, generally not on the side of the administration, were found voting with the majority, but there were others, who, in every measure for the defence of the country, were consistent in opposition.

Congress adjourned on the 10th of July. The debates during this session showed a degree of acrimony in the two parties, more dangerous perhaps, than the violence with which important measures had been heretofore discussed. The lines between them were more distinctly drawn; and though there were always some who voted with either on particular questions, according to their own opinions or the wishes of their constituents, the number

of uncertain votes was becoming more limited. Nor was party feeling longer confined to the halls of legislation. It had entered into the constitution of society itself. Old and attached friends were estranged. Men who had fought side by side during the war of the revolution, who had acted together in the not less perilous scenes of the continental Congress; were now personal as well as political enemies. The very ties of blood were sundered by the bitterness of the strife.

Great changes had, since the first Congress, taken place in both Houses, each party losing its original leaders. Two, perhaps the most conspicuous, had retired at the end of the last session. Ames, before whose voice, rendered more impressive by the disease which wasted his slight and feeble frame, a turbulent and reckless majority had quailed; Ames, whose genius and patriotism had deservedly placed him in the van of the federalists, and Madison his chief opponent. Madison, the federalist of one session, thenceforward democrat for life; he who had sunk from the independent statesman, to be the follower of a demagogue, the shadow and destined successor of Jefferson.

Among those who were now conspicuous in the federal ranks, there were, in the Senate—Goodhue, Sedgwick, Tracy, Stockton, Bingham, and Howard; and in the House—Otis, Sewall, Griswold, Goodrich, Bayard, Sitgreaves, Harper, Rutledge, and Smith.[a] On the other side also, there was a strong array; Langdon, Tazewell, and Mason, in the Senate; Livingston, Gallatin, Giles,[b] Nicholas, Venable, Macon, and Baldwin, among the Representatives.

No state in the Union, it may be permitted to observe, had, during the period of the constitutional government, been more ably or more honorably represented than Con-

[a] William Smith, of Charleston district. He retired at the end of this session, and was replaced by Mr. Thomas Pinckney.

[b] Mr. Giles also resigned shortly after

necticut. Her muster roll was filled with the names of MEN. There were Sherman, Ellsworth, Johnson, Hillhouse, Tracy, Wadsworth, Swift, Griswold, Trumbull, Davenport, Mitchell, Goodrich, and Dana; all of sterling worth, of high abilities, of unspotted integrity, and of patriotism undoubted; and there were more at home. Such was Connecticut, when fresh from the war of the revolution; before democracy had polluted her soil, she claimed the proud title of being the most purely federal state in the Union.

JAMES HILLHOUSE TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, SEN.

PHILADELPHIA, July 10, 1797.

Dear Sir,

Your favour of the 21st instant came to hand only just in time to enable us to get through an act of Congress, making the provision wished for by the State of Connecticut. Enclosed is a copy of the act which has passed, and which has met the approbation and signature of the President of the United States. Permit me here to suggest the propriety of the General Assembly's passing an act limiting the time for bringing in the outstanding notes, to receive payment out of the funded debt of the United States; or if the holder did not incline to shift his security, to have the notes registered in the office of the comptroller; and to bar all those that should not be brought in for payment, or to be registered by the 4th day of March, 1799, the time to which the act of Congress is continued in force. This, and this only will enable the state to ascertain the amount of their outstanding debt, for which payment will be demanded, and to make suitable provisions for its discharge. Congress will close their session this day, Although they have not done all that might be wished, they have done some things, which, in my opinion, will be of substantial benefit. Enclosed you will find a list of the acts that have passed. Much more will be necessary to be done should our affairs assume a more serious aspect. Four or five hundred thousand dollars would, I believe, be a moderate estimate of the annual amount of the addition to the revenue, from the acts of the present session, when those acts get into fair and full operation.

Mr. Marshall is here, ready to take his departure on his important mission to France. Mr. Gerry has accepted. I flatter myself, perhaps because I most sincerely hope it, that success will crown their efforts, and that they may be able to secure to the United States their honour, peace, and the enjoyment of our neutral rights. It is unfortunate that our sufferings have not brought about a perfect union at home, for I am persuaded that had we no persons in this country actuated by any but truly American feelings, we should not have been in a situation so embarrassing, and that a perfect union among ourselves would be the most likely means of getting us out of our present difficulties.

You doubtless will have heard ere this reaches you, of the intercepted letter of Governor Blount, a Senator of the United States, which is of a very extraordinary nature; there is no doubt of the letter being genuine, and that it contemplated a most barbarous and vile plot, the execution of which must have involved the United States in consequences of a serious nature. Mr. Blount has been expelled the Senate by an almost unanimous vote, there being one only against it, and the House of Representatives have *nem. con.* voted an impeachment for high crimes and misdemeanors. It is an evil of a very serious aspect that so many men high in office and possessing the public confidence, should betray their trust. There is one circumstance which affords some small alleviation, which is, that none of the traitors are remarkable for their attachment to the administration of our government.

It has been with much concern that I have heard of your indisposition. I hope the time is not far distant when you will find yourself in the enjoyment of perfect health. With sentiments of the highest respect and esteem, I am your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

JAMES HILLHOUSE.

One of the new envoys left the United States in July, the other early in August, to join Mr. Pinckney in Holland. From there they proceeded in September to Paris.

The instructions given to them, while they scrupulously maintained the dignity and rights of the United States, afforded no obstructions to a settlement of difficulties on the part of France. No concession was required which might wound her pride—no petty demands were made which to an irritable and excited nation might seem degrading. On the contrary, they were authorized on the principle of the British treaty to "terminate our differences in such manner, as without referring to the merits of our complaints and pretensions, might be the best calculated to produce mutual satisfaction and good understanding." The depredations on American commerce were to be referred for settlement to commissioners. The articles in the former commercial treaty respecting enemies' property in neutral ships and articles to be considered contraband of war, which had been sources of complaint by her, were to be yielded, and the usual law of nations restored; the documents necessary to substantiate the neutral character of a vessel to be defined; the mu-

tual guaranty of possessions to be abolished, or specific succors stipulated instead; the articles of the existing treaties which had been differently construed by the two nations were to be settled; and the consular convention remodelled, or suffered to expire. In every instance where rights had been acquired *by force of treaty*, the envoys were authorized to relinquish them if demanded by France; the rights which depended, not upon treaty, but upon the laws of nature and of nations, were to be resolutely insisted on.

Meantime, as respected the *role d'equipage*, in order that this pretext for captures might be removed, permission was given to the collectors to furnish vessels with a certificate of the facts usually stated in the paper so called, upon application being made therefor; but with an expressed reservation and exception, that as documents of the kind were not required by law, nor usually furnished, the want thereof was not in any case to prejudice the rights and interests of citizens of the United States.

FROM JAMES McHENRY.

PHILA., 19th Aug., 1797.

My Dear Sir,

Altho' I have often experienced how much better it would have been for me that you had remained here,[a] I yield nevertheless to personal considerations when I reflect on the circumstance that carried and detains you where you are. What you are doing now you will long remember, when what you might have done here would have been soon forgotten by the public; besides I do not imagine that your department has suffered materially by your absence, no points of difficulty or magnitude having occurred.

I have reason to believe that the arrangements I have made on the frontiers have served to keep the Indians quiet and attached, and that the projects to disturb that quarter will be totally shipwrecked.

The town is considerably alarmed with the appearance of a contagious fever. I have sent to provide a retreat for my family about forty miles on the Lancaster road, but I flatter myself that there will be no occasion to use it. Yours, sincerely and affectionately,

JAMES McHENRY.

[a] Wolcott was then on a visit to Connecticut, attending his father, who was ill.

## TO OLIVER WOLCOTT, Sen.

Gray's Gardens, Sept. 4, 1797.

I arrived here last evening in good health and without exposure to the sickness in the city, which place I avoided except in the upper part of Market-street. More of the houses are deserted than was the case in 1793, and business is suspended almost entirely. My situation is safe and convenient. So many have gone that the mortality will not be great, but business is over for the season.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

Gray's Gardens, Sept. 7th, 1797.

I arrived here on Sunday evening, to which place the treasury offices had been removed. The state of the city is much more unpleasant than I expected to find it; business is nearly suspended. About fifteen hundred houses are entirely deserted, and more than half the people have left the city. The mortality has not, and I believe will not be great, as the danger of contagion will be generally avoided by retiring into the country. Though I think that there is no ground to expect that the disorder will be extirpated before the return of frosty weather. I have taken such measures for securing the revenue, as circumstances rendered necessary, and expect to be able to accomplish the objects of the law without incurring much extra expense, or any considerable deviation from the prescribed forms.

Gray's Gardens, Sept. 1797.

Since I have been here, I have begun to entertain doubts respecting the existence of an unusual contagious fever. Most, if not all the phenomena which have yet appeared, can be satisfactorily accounted for from other causes. The sudden deaths which happened to a few in Penn street, spread a general alarm; the project of forcing the sick from their houses, excited terrour; the poor, when sick, have at once been deserted by their friends, and have concealed their situation. The mode of medical treatment which has been most prevalent, would certainly have destroyed a great portion of the debilitated and intemperate people to whom it has been applied, had they been in a usual state of health. It is not for me to say, however, that what would kill those in health, will not cure those who are sick. The committee who attend the hospital, and Doct. Stevens, a very sensible and well educated physician, however, have lately said, that not one of those in the hospital were sick of the yellow fever, or any disorder resembling that of 1793. Than these persons, none can be more competent judges of the facts they assert. The depopulation of the city, however, continues; business has ceased; and robberies which are a consequence, have commenced. I do not imagine that tranquillity will be restored until the latter part of October.

I forgot to mention that the captain of marines, and sailing-master of the frig-

ate are sick. It is said they will die. The work however, is prosecuted, and will not, I believe, be discontinued; at any rate, the vessel is safe under the charge of Captain Barry. The public business will, I believe, suffer no otherwise than by being thrown somewhat in arrear. By extraordinary exertions, the chasm will soon be repaired; the fact is at least so in respect to the treasury. Bache is continually enquiring what has become of the government. The gaol, though nearly full of rogues and swindlers, might, however receive him, if an occasion should present to render his "removal" necessary. There is, therefore, enough of government remaining for his wants.

With respects to Mrs. Adams, I have the honour to be, with perfect deference, your obedient servant.

P. S. Before I went to Connecticut, I took measures for having the dies and presses prepared for executing the act laying duties on stamped papers. It was my opinion at first, that it would be difficult to be prepared by the first of January, in every part of the United States; the delays occasioned by the sickness, will render it absolutely impracticable. When Congress meet, I presume the causes of delay must be stated to them.

## TO MRS. WOLCOTT.

GRAY'S GARDENS, Sept. 9th, 1797.

I am well, though I find it a dull story to live alone in a small room in a tavern, with a prospect of a crooked river, and occupied either with some dull business, or talking of the distresses of a great city. For the present, however, it will be my duty to remain here. The affairs of the city are, I think, growing worse. The depopulation continues, and I believe the terrour to be increasing. The mortality is not great; but generally speaking, those who are taken sick, die either by the disease or the doctor—or both. Some well informed and honest men, deny there is any unusual sickness. For my part, I have no opinion, and wish I could forbear from thinking on the subject. The physicians are considerably disagreed as to the origin and nature of the disorder. The depleting or bleeding plan, in a greater or less degree, is however, most prevalent. Many bleed ten, twelve, or even more times, in from four to seven days. The want of confidence, terrour and anxiety of the women and all delicate persons, is extreme. In short, though not more than from ten to twenty persons die of a day, the people are as wretched as in 1793, except that the physical suffering from actual sickness is less.

## TO MRS. WOLCOTT.

GRAY'S GARDENS, Sept. 15, 1797.

* * * The Jacobinical affection in my bowels has been cured by small doses of rhubarb, and drinking camomile tea. I should have had the honour, if I had been in the city, of having been cured of the yellow fever at

an expense of 150 ounces of blood and a salivation. The deaths in the city have latterly diminished; whether the disorder is running out, I cannot say.

In the morning when I walk in these gardens, I fancy I feel much as Adam did in Eden before he lost a rib. The place is mighty pretty, and that is all. After a man has gone round the walks one way, if he pleases, he may go round again; or he may return back upon his track, or he may sit down or go upon the bridge and see a lazy fellow hold a line for hours in the river without taking a fish; but if he means to enjoy himself tolerably, he will, as I do, either read or sit down to business. In the evening the scene changes. Then we have Eves in plenty, of all nations, tongues and colours—but do not be jealous; I have not seen one yet, whom I have thought pretty.

I often go to the Woodlands; once I dined in company with Mr. and Mrs. Liston, who enquired kindly after you; Bache would say because you are in the British interest. I have not yet seen Mr. Bingham. The dukes are all there; Miss Willing, folks say, is certainly to be married to the eldest.[a] Mr. H. remains in the city; my friends, the old maidens, are flown off.

## TO JAMES McHENRY.

Gray's Gardens, Sept. 15, 1797.

I have the permission of Mr. Steele, to transmit to you the enclosed letters; they contain information which may be of use. William Polk, the writer, is the present supervisor of North Carolina, and may be relied on. It seems that William Blount's influence in Tennessee is not destroyed; this is not a good omen, but we must make the best of it. It is important to disconnect the Georgia speculations and interest from Blount's project, if possible, else a war with the Indians may yet be excited. I hope you and your family are well. I have been troubled with a Jacobinical affection in my bowels; but I think I have subdued it. The sickness diminishes in Philadelphia, but is said to increase in Baltimore. May God bless you.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT.

Quincy, Sept. 15, 1797.

Dear Sir,

Last night I received your letter of Sept. 7th. Many applications have been made to me for the place of Dr. Wray.[b] * * * * * These are all respectable characters; but all things considered, my judgment inclines to Dr. Rush, on account of ancient merits and present abilities. Of his integrity and independence I have a good opinion. I have written so to the Secretary of State. If you have any doubts, pray write to Col. Pickering to suspend the appointment, for I wish to have the subject well considered.

* * * *

There are subjects of some moment to reflect on. Is there a law in force em-

[a] Now King of the French. [b] Superintendent of the Mint.

powering the President to convene Congress at any other place than Philadelphia? If there is, what place shall be chosen? I am for New York, *entre nous;* but if you think any other place preferable, please to name it and state your reasons. I hope you will favour me early with minutes of what, in your department, or any other, ought to be remembered at the opening of Congress. I am, dear sir, yours affectionately,

JOHN ADAMS.

## FROM JAMES McHENRY.

NEAR DOWNINGSTOWN, 22d Sept., 1797.

My Dear Sir,

The bilious fever, with which I have been attacked, has left me weak and subject to feverish returns, that affect both my sleep and my spirits. I flatter myself, however, that a little care and time will enable me to enjoy the beauties of this part of the country; which are far more various and interesting than the dull, damp, sedgy, serpentine, sorrowful river whose banks have become your residence. What obstructs my recovery, is the business which I am obliged to attend to. Tennessee and Cox have a good deal disturbed me; but I expect (as my nephew has informed you) that the measures which I have taken, will prevent any insurrection in that quarter, and dissipate Cox's project. It is true that Blount has still influence in Tennessee.

I received a letter, yesterday, from Capt. Guion, dated 24th July, Chickasaw Bluff, where he was with his party. Don Carlos Dehault Delassus commanding, protested against his passing; he proceeded, nevertheless, assigning for reason, his orders and the necessity to deliver to the Chickasaws their annual stipend, and to preserve the peace of the Indians agreeably to treaty; but promised, at the same time, not to go beyond the Bluff, "until the present difficulty, arising on the interpretation or construction of the treaty, had ceased; and that information to that effect had arrived, either from the Governor General of Louisiana, or from my superior in office in the government of the United States."

You see how we are perplexed by those it is very difficult to command, or make understand their orders. Yours affectionately,

JAMES McHENRY.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

GRAY'S, near Philadelphia, Sept. 26, 1797.

I have been honoured with your favour of the 15th inst. * * * *

Doct. Rush's pretensions, founded on public services and celebrity of character, are certainly superior to any of the candidates who have been named. I do not know that he has any other fault, than being somewhat addicted to the modern philosophy. Being, however, of a disposition naturally benevolent, and not apt to be long tenacious of any particular system, his error, if it be one, will probably yield to topical remedies. But to be serious, my opinion is, that though

Doct. Rush's mind is not exactly of the right cast, no better selection can be made among the candidates. That the President may have information of all who have applied, I enclose certain letters which have come to hand since I wrote last.

* * * *

By an act of Congress passed on the 3d of April, 1794, the President is authorized to convene Congress at such place as he may judge proper when the legal place of meeting is affected by contagious sickness. There being authority to issue the proclamation, the expediency of the measure remains only to be considered. That there is a contagious sickness in Philadelphia, is now, I believe certain. For a week or ten days it was nearly extinguished; it is now extended more than it has before been, and is so firmly seated that it must have its course. Whatever may have been the case, it cannot now be suppressed by any regulation of police. If, as I have no doubt is the truth, this fever is communicated by specific contagion, and is similar to that which has before affected Philadelphia, New York, New Haven, Baltimore, and Norfolk, it will immediately terminate after a severe frost. Such a frost will in all probability happen in the month of October, or at any rate before the meeting of Congress. The expense to the public of removing the officers will be considerable. The loss of time, especially to the treasury, will be a great evil. The private expense to the officers of government will also be to most of them inconvenient. The effect of a removal upon the minds of the citizens would be unpleasant, as it would increase and prolong the misfortunes of a great number of dependent families who subsist upon the advantage they derive from the concourse of people who resort to the seat of government. The general interest of the country requires that as little public notice be taken of this sickness as possible, especially as some of the physicians have erroneously attributed to it a domestic origin. The loss of capital and credit which Philadelphia must suffer, cannot be easily calculated, and the sufferings of the poor can be hardly considered as yet commenced. If Congress do not meet in Philadelphia, the next winter, a great portion of foreign consignments destined for the supply of the year will be diverted from their natural course. If the President shall, however, determine to convene Congress at some other place than Philadelphia, New York appears to be the most eligible place. Baltimore is affected by sickness; Lancaster cannot furnish convenient accommodations, and is not so accessible as New York. This last place is, however, exposed to the contagion, which may yet break out there notwithstanding their extreme caution.

I have found it necessary to give directions for the removal of the custom-house to Chester, at which place and Marcus Hook, all vessels will be discharged until further orders. Though orders were promptly given for preparing the dies for executing the stamp act, and though the progress has been as great as was to have been expected, yet it will be impossible to commence the execution of the law by the first of January. I apprehended that the time would be found inadequate when the act was passed.

The receipts into the treasury exceed my calculations. All the remittances to Amsterdam arrived safe. I shall remit, in a few weeks, sufficient funds to meet

the public engagements till the first of March ensuing. The Secretary of State writes that a treaty has been effected with Tunis for sixty thousand dollars. I have informed him that the money wanted for the Barbary service shall be furnished when he applies for it. It is proposed to ship $160,000 in specie. The Algerine frigate is nearly ready except her guns. A fatality seems to attend every attempt to obtain cannon; the contractor says that the drafts and models were wrong. They were made by a French engineer whose skill has been highly rated. I am making every effort to supply the deficiency, and have now a fair prospect of success. The heavy masts, spars, and timber for the Dey of Algiers, will be ready this fall if there is a rise of water in the Susquehannah. The shells, cannon-balls, and powder are in a course of being provided by Mr. Frances. As the peace is general with the Barbary powers, it appears to be important to send them ample supplies this fall, to effect which we are making every exertion.

The French and Spaniards do not appear to have been successful in their attempts upon the northern Indians. One Coxe, of Georgia, is endeavouring to establish an illegal settlement in the Indian country near the south bend of the Tennessee. Blount's influence in Tennessee is yet very considerable. Some persons high in office, say that he is a virtuous man who has been persecuted by the tools of the administration.

The French depredations grow more and more outrageous, and from various appearances I infer that the spirit of commercial adventure in this country has received a serious check. I shall attend to the President's desire respecting what may occur as proper to be communicated to Congress.

P. S. An embarrassing question has been brought forward through the intrigues of the French consuls, who have distributed a form of what they call a *Role d'Equipage* which they have represented as necessary to the protection of American vessels. If the papers had been refused, it would have been said that the government was fastidious on a point of mere form, for which it was willing to expose the American commerce to destruction with a view to promote a war with France. To have complied without annexing some condition to the papers, would have been to authorize the pretext upon which numerous condemnations have taken place. After much hesitation I authorized the enclosed letter to be written, which under all the circumstances of the country will I hope be judged proper by the President.

## FROM JAMES McHENRY.

Near Downington, 2 Oct., 1797.

My Dear Sir,

Mr. Lewis writes me word on the 29th ult. "I saw Mr. Wolcott, the Secretary of the Treasury, yesterday, who was very well. He informed me there was a general or very strong report that Gen. Wilkinson was in the southwestern territory at the head of the army there. He mentioned it with some surprise."

On the 6th of Sept. the General was at Detroit, and making preparations to move with a small detachment to Kaskaskias, where dispositions to revolt among

a few French settlers had been exhibited. I believe I shall be able to settle measures in the southwestern territory (meaning Tennessee) without him. You will find the particulars of this affair in Fenno. I am kept too busy to get well. Yours sincerely,

JAMES McHENRY.

## TO JAMES McHENRY.

Gray's, Oct. 4, 1797.

I have received your favour of the 2d inst. It was, to be sure, an odd thing that Capt. Guion should suffer himself to be embargoed by the Spanish officer, and should afterwards give a kind of parole. All these things prove, however, that we are not a rash people. We talk well, and for coaxing, cheating, intriguing, and carrying points by address, are perhaps equal to any people in the world, *except our allies*. But we have prudently renounced our old way of serving the devil by quarrelling and fighting. As Secretary of the Treasury, I approve of this mightily. It is certainly the best for the finances. You will, however, by hook or by crook, get the Spanish posts, and the Dons will be more anxious to keep what remains than to retake them. A striking interposition of Providence to mortify the pride of man, has occurred at Boston. I have no doubt the frigate would have gone off, if such a disappointment had not been necessary to convince the people of that town that they are finite and dependent beings.[a] When an opportunity can be had for the poor frigate to take a bathing in a modest and reasonable manner, she will be off. What ought, in your opinion, to be the order of march for the next session? Can anything better be done than to invite Congress to resume the consideration of the measures which were proposed to them the last time? Our circumstances have not materially altered, and not in the least for the better. The system was, I think, a good one, and I believe the people by reflection have become converts to it. At any rate, a repetition of the advice will shew seriousness and conviction in the mind of the Executive. There will be no real peace in Europe, though possibly there may be a nominal one. Under the present state of things our commerce will soon be ruined. Do these things meet your general sentiments?

## FROM CHARLES LEE.

Alexandria, 5th October, 1797.

Dear Sir,

* * * *

Whatever be the events in Europe, it seems to me that in the present vicious state of society our commerce will not be safe unless our commercial vessels have the means of defence. I do not think that a peace in Europe, accompanied by a treaty with France and us, will for some time be able to protect our trade from

[a] A frigate had stuck fast in launching.

depredations. From what I hear in Virginia, the anti-Americans, who generally, too, are against the administration, are diminishing both in number and respect.

Monroe is said to be leading a very retired life at his farm, near Monticello, and now and then, some enquiries are made about his book, of which, however, nothing seems to be yet known. I wish to return as soon as possible to the seat of government, but my return will be deferred till there is more safety than at present. Very sincerely I remain your friend and obedient servant,

CHARLES LEE.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT.

EAST CHESTER, 20 miles from New York, October 12, 1797.

Dear Sir,

Last night I arrived at Col. Smith's and my family will probably make this house their home till they can go to Philadelphia with safety. Your reasons against convening Congress at any other place than Philadelphia, have great weight; but must all be overruled if the plague continues in that city. Perhaps it may not be necessary to remove many of the books and papers of the public officers to New York if Congress should be convened there. They may adjourn to Philadelphia after sitting in New York a month, or less if they are satisfied that the distemper is extinguished. I mean not, however, to have you understand that I am determined to convene the legislature at New York. I shall wait for time and your advice, and will avoid it if prudence will permit.

* * * *

Mrs. Wolcott was well at Hartford on Sunday, The child had an ill turn, but was better. It is a great pleasure to me to be again within a hundred miles of you, and I pray you to write me as often as possible. Your minutes of communications and recommendations to Congress at the opening of the session, I wish to have as soon as possible. Will you be so good as to write to Mr. McHenry and Mr. Lee for theirs. With great respect, I am, dear Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

## FROM JAMES McHENRY.

NEAR DOWNINGTON, 13th Oct., 1797.

My Dear Sir,

I have been kept so very busy since I received your letter of the 4th, between the affairs of Blount, Cox, and the Mississippi, (the current of which latter river you know is not so easy to stem,) as to have left me no time to reply, particularly to a part of it; and even now I can do no more than signify my entire concurrence with the line of march which you have suggested for the troops. Nothing has come to my knowledge either of a domestic or foreign nature, that would make a change in it either prudent or politic. I long to get into winter quarters. Yours, affectionately,

JAMES McHENRY.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

GRAY'S FERRY, Oct. 16, 1797.

I have had the honour to receive your favour of the 12th instant, and congratulate you on your safe arrival so near the seat of government. To prevent the possibility of risque in remitting you the sum of two thousand dollars, I enclosed a letter to Mr. Sands, who will pay that sum to your order.

The sickness is unquestionably diminishing in this city; its operation is the same as in 1793, in one respect; the cold weather proves fatal to those who had contracted the disorder, while it arrests the progress of contagion; I speak from particular enquiry and observation; I have been repeatedly in the city; yesterday I spent the day there, and went through most of the principal streets, where there is in fact no sickness.

By letters from Mr. McHenry and Mr. Lee, I consider myself authorized to say, that they will concur in an opinion which I maintain, namely, that nothing has happened during the summer to justify a change of the system recommended by the President at the last session. That system was in my opinion a wise one, and ought to have been adopted by Congress in all its parts. Whatever may be the issue of the negotiation with France, whether the war in Europe is, or is not to continue, I hold it for certain that the equilibrium of society will not soon be restored. There is too much vice, violence, and ambition in the world, to render it reasonable to build a hope that a weak and defenceless commerce will not be plundered. As our commerce cannot be defended by public force, the alternative presented is, whether it shall be abandoned or defended at private expense, under some systematical public regulation. When this alternative is well understood, the people will not long hesitate. The abandonment of commerce is impossible. The plan upon which the country has been settled, upon which cities have been built, and upon which a great part of our social establishments have been founded, pre-supposes an extensive foreign commerce. I conceive, therefore, that the character and leading idea of the President's address, should be to inculcate the necessity of the measures before recommended, not only because the measures appear to be the best adapted to the situation and means of the country; but because such a course will serve to impress ideas of firmness, premeditation, and consistency on the part of the Executive. Not having had access to the papers of the state and war departments, I do not know of any particular measures, which will be required to be noticed. The treasury is in good order, and nothing need be mentioned respecting it, except that the President has directed the estimates to be prepared and communicated as usual.

It has been impossible to organize the stamp tax; but as this is not an affair in which the immediate agency of the President was expected by the legislature, and as it is possible that some zealous men may make a question, whether some blame or censure cannot be attached to the department, I think it expedient that the matter should be left solely upon my responsibility.

I shall write to Mr. McHenry and Mr. Lee, as the President desires. I hope and presume, however, that we shall all be able to meet before Congress are to

convene. My situation has been burdensome and unpleasant in the extreme, but I trust the public business has not suffered.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT.

EAST CHESTER, Oct. 20, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of the 16th—thank you for your care in writing to Mr. Sands, who has furnished me with two thousand dollars, for which I gave him duplicate receipts to serve for one, according to your desire.

Though I rejoice to learn from your letter that the sickness in the city is diminishing, I cannot admit your walk through the principal streets of it to be full proof, because it is generally agreed that the principal streets are deserted by their inhabitants. You remember the anxieties and alarms among the members of Congress in 1793, their continual regret that no power had existed to convene them elsewhere, and their solicitude to pass an act to provide such an authority in future. There will be so much uneasiness among them if that authority is not exerted, that there will probably be no Congress formed before Christmas, and a few who will venture into the city will be there in idleness and out of their element.

I thank you for the sentiments you have expressed relative to the system to be pursued. Can you send me a copy of the speech at the commencement of last session? I have no copy of it here, and perhaps shall find it difficult to procure one. I should be glad, however, to know your opinion. whether our envoys will be received or not?—whether they will succeed or not? with hints at your reasons; if any intelligence has furnished any.

The organization of the stamp tax suggests a vexation to me. The bill was worth money, and money was so much wanted for the public service, that I would not put it at risque; otherwise I would have negatived that bill, not from personal feelings, for I care not a farthing for all the personal power in the world; but the office of the Secretary of the Treasury is, in that bill, premeditatedly set up as a rival to that of the President; and that policy will be pursued if we are not on our guard, till we have a quintuple, or centuple Executive Directory, with all the Babylonish dialect which modern pedants much affect.

I pray you to continue to write to me as often as possible. With high esteem, I am, dear sir, your very humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

## FROM RUFUS KING.

LONDON, Aug. 6, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I am much obliged to you for the very satisfactory documents that you have sent me, respecting the liquidation of our debt to the French Republic; when an occasion offers I will make use of them to remove the errors which have prevailed on that subject. Messrs. Barings have informed you that they have sold

the remainder of the 6 per cts., remitted to them on account of the Barbary treaties. The loss from the low price of these stocks, and by the unfavourable operation of exchanges, has been much more considerable than could have been expected. I do not know that the business could have been managed better than it has been by Col. Humphries; but one feels a little concerned in being any way connected with an unfortunate transaction, in which you have neither power nor responsibility. From my letters of 27th July and of the 5th instant, to the Secretary of State, you will perceive that I have been obliged to make an agreement with the Messrs. Barings to advance a large sum of money to Col. Humphries, which he supposes it possible that he may want to complete our Barbary treaties. I should send you copies of the letters relative to the subject, but I have not time to complete them in season for this conveyance, as I have sent copies to the Secretary of State it is of no importance that I omit them to you. I hope there will be a reasonable provision for the reimbursement of this advance; an unexpected delay would injure our credit, and punctuality would be advantageous on a future occasion. Our credit is good, but our stocks are not sought for; this is accounted for by the variety and extent of the objects of profitable speculation that everywhere exists.

I can give you no satisfaction concerning the probability of peace; the French continue their depredation on our commerce, and have prevailed on the Spaniards to join them in plundering our navigation. It may be prudent to require the collectors to examine the ship's articles and to have them formed in the manner the French require; but with the present temper, other causes will be discovered to justify their captures. Pray look at and correct the French translation of our passports; it contains what seems to be an instruction to the shipmasters how they are to obtain a passport, but it makes no part of the passport, is not inserted in the English copy, (I mean the column which contains the passport in our language) and has been made the occasion of much mischief to our trade; besides, as it stands, the passport is absurd. One observation further, respecting passports; we have made certain regulations concerning the return and delivery into some public office, of the registers granted to our ships in cases where they are sold to foreigners, &c. We have no regulation whatever concerning passports or sea letters. They are never returned; and it is a common thing, on the sale of an American vessel to a foreigner, to deliver the passport or sea letter to the purchaser. The practice will bring our passports into discredit. Yours, very sincerely,

RUFUS KING.

P. S. 10 Aug. Our late accounts from France demonstrate, that the return of peace will depend on the result of the struggle that exists between the Directory and the two councils. The rupture between them is open, and one or both must yield. The armies, which seem to be opposed to the councils and the nation, may interpose and give another constitution to France. You will deceive yourselves if you rely too confidently on peace; it is too problematical to be considered as probable.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

GRAY'S GARDENS, Oct. 24, 1797.

I have the honour of acknowledging the receipt of your favour of Oct. 20th.

What I have written respecting the state of the city, has been my most sincere belief. I have fulfilled what I supposed to be the President's wish, by seeking for information of the most authentic kind. In proof that my opinion is not a singular one, I take the liberty to mention, that the Custom House business is expected to be resumed in the usual manner, and at the old office, on Thursday of this week. The Treasury offices will also be opened on Monday next. Mr. Nourse, who lives in South street, will probably keep his family out of town a few days longer. I should not fulfil my duty if I did not state to the President my real opinion, which is, that Congress may safely convene in Philadelphia at the appointed time, and foreseeing, as I think I do truly, much popular discontent and considerable public inconvenience, if a proclamation is issued, I hope the measure will not be adopted. It is my opinion that the envoys sent by the President will be received. My reasons are, that the mission has been divested of all the formal objections which were ever suggested in respect to that of Mr. Pinckney; and because a refusal to receive and hear a solemn embassy, appointed for the sole and express purpose of discussing and adjusting existing discontents, would be an act unusual among even savage nations; unnecessarily violent and infamous, and contrary to what seems to be the system of France, which is, to divide and subdue by cajolery and violence.

Bache's paper has, for a long time, been prophetic of the course of French policy, and this informs us, that the envoys will be received with stately reserve, but that they will be able to effect nothing until after the negotiations at Lisle are terminated. This information or conjecture is probable, from what is known of the personal feelings of Mr. Talleyrand, the Minister. He was desirous of being introduced to the late President, but as he was then a proscribed emigrant, and as the President was informed that a compliance with the request would disoblige the French Minister here, it was declined. Mr. Talleyrand was ever afterwards dissatisfied, and if he possesses vindictive feelings, they will naturally be displayed in a haughty deportment towards the envoys.

I do not think it probable that a treaty will be formed with France, until after a peace has been made with England, for two reasons:

1st. During the war it will be the interest of France to plunder our commerce, were she not apprehensive that by open rupture our vessels would be placed in a situation to be secure from any considerable depredations in future. War would be probably declared at once. Even this apprehension would be barely sufficient to overcome the temptation to declare war, and thus cancel at once the numerous claims of this country, on account of the injuries which have been already committed.

2d. During the war with England, France will not be able to discern her permanent policy with respect to the United States. If the issue is favourable to the maritime views of France, she will adopt severe and restrictive measures with

respect to our navigation. If England, on the other hand, is able to preserve her present naval ascendancy, France will be interested in nourishing our navigation interests. The result of these reflections is a conviction of my mind, that the negotiation will be tedious and protracted; and that there are no data now existing, by which the degree of success can be calculated. My last letter from England is from Mr. King, dated Aug. 10th. On the subject of peace, he says: "You will deceive yourselves, if you rely too confidently on peace; it is too problematical to be considered as probable." I observe the President's observations on the Stamp Act, with attention. With respect to many persons concerned in that measure, there was certainly nothing disrespectful intended. With your permission, I will state what I conceive to be the argument on the subject; and hereafter, so far as I have any agency in drawing bills, I will govern myself by what shall be decided.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT.

East Chester, Oct. 26, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of the 20th, and thank you for your vigilant attention to the progress, or rather the decline of the fever in Philadelphia.

I request your explicit opinion, and pray you, if you can, to obtain those of Mr. McHenry and Mr. Lee, whether, from the prevalence of contagious sickness in Philadelphia, or the existence of any other circumstances, it would be hazardous to the lives or health of the members of Congress to meet in that city on the second Monday in November. If you cannot, with very clear consciences, answer in the negative, I shall issue a proclamation convening Congress at New York. For myself, I have no apprehension of danger; but the members of Congress will be more exposed than I shall be, and I hold myself interested with the care of their health; a precious deposit, which I will preserve according to the best of my judgment, with perfect integrity, and with more caution than I would my own. It is scarcely worth a question, whether they shall be convened at Trenton, Lancaster, or any other place. I know from painful experience, they cannot be accommodated at any of those places. The place will be Philadelphia or New York.

*Si quid novisti, rectius imperte.* I am, dear sir, as ever, with great regard,

JOHN ADAMS.

East Chester, Oct. 27th, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of the 24th, and thank you for your careful attention to the distemper in Philadelphia. Representations, similar to yours, are sent me from various quarters. That there would be considerable public inconvenience in a convention of Congress to any place out of Philadelphia, is certain, and this consideration has great weight. That there would be popular clamour, at least much loud snarling, among the inhabitants of the foul dens in Philadelphia, is very probable. This, however, would have little weight with me against

a measure of general necessity or expediency. Mr. McHenry and Mr. Pickering are of your opinion, and this union will have more weight than all the brawlers of Philadelphia, even though they should be countenanced by the prudent citizens.

Your conjectures concerning the success of our envoys to France, appear to me to be very probable. Yet I cannot apprehend so much from the personal feelings of Talleyrand. He received a great deal of cordial hospitality in this country, and had not the smallest reason to complain, that ever came to my knowledge, in any place. As a reasonable man, he could not but approve of the President's caution, knowing himself to be upon the list of emigrants; and knowing the clamour which would be raised by the French minister, at the presentation of an illustrious Frenchman by any other than himself. It is a part of the duty of an ambassador to judge of the persons among his countrymen, whom it would be proper to present to government. It would have been a slight, at least, to the French minister, to have received a man he had refused to present. It would have been offensive to the government of France, to have received a man proscribed by their laws. There is, however, little immediate advantage to be expected from this embassy, I fear. It will be spun out into an immeasurable length, unless quickened by an embargo. We must unshackle our merchant ships. If Congress will not do it, I shall have scruples about continuing the restrictions upon the collectors.

What the session of Congress will produce, I know not. But a torpor, a despondency has seized all men in America, as well as in England. The system of terror has, according to an Indian expression, "put petticoats upon them." The treachery of the common people against their own countries; the transports with which they seize the opportunity of indulging their envy, and gratifying their revenge against all whom they have been in the habit of looking up to, at every hazard to their countries, and in the end at every expense of misery to themselves, has given a paralytic stroke to the wisdom and courage of nations. If peace is refused to England, they will leap the gulph. Their stocks are not much higher than those of the French. The latter, I see, in some speech in the Council of Five Hundred, have been at forty. Can these be the general mass of the French national debt, old as well as new? The French Directory, I take it for granted, must have war; war, open or understood, is their eternal doom. I am, dear sir, with unalterable esteem, your humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

## TO THE PRESIDENT.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct 27, 1797.

I feel a sincere pleasure in representing to the President, that the citizens are returning to their houses. The city resumes its usual appearance, and by the beginning of the next week, I believe most of the houses will be opened as usual. I hope to have the pleasure of paying my respects to yourself and family, some day the next week. No news of much importance has been received by the William Penn.

## FROM CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

HARTFORD, Oct. 29, 1797.

Dear Sir,

Mrs. Wolcott either has, or will shortly, give you all the anecdotes in the land of Connecticut, up to the time she left it. And since, nothing has happened worthy of your whim, considered as a man, or with your adjunct of an aristocratic man, the Secretary of the Treasury. My wife, good woman, sends forth many doleful complaints on account of my being about to leave her; and yet, as a Christian woman ought, she bestirs herself notably to get everything in order for our once more quitting our house. It is yet doubtful whether I set out in season to be present at the pronunciation of your speech. When a great man is overwhelmed with expressions of public applause, I suppose all in a subordinate grade take a share. If the winds have blown from our hemisphere, take care you don't charge the speech with too much gas. Always remember, nothing gives a *sans-culotte* more joy, than to take a sturdy aristocrat when vaunting.

From the accounts we have of our father, we hope he has been, some days past, less subject to nervous symptoms. I don't perceive the approach of cold weather proves unfavourable to him. I shall put up the things Mrs. Wolcott directed, and have them sent by a vessel that goes from this place about the middle this next month. Mary Ann, and all of us, are anxious to hear of Mrs. Wolcott's safe arrival. Our love to her and the children. Affectionately yours,

CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT.

NEW YORK, Nov. 7, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your favour of yesterday. I shall be obliged to you if you will inform General McPherson, that I am very sensible of the honour intended me by the troops of the city and vicinity. I shall dine at New Brunswick tomorrow, and on Thursday get as far as Trenton, or perhaps two miles beyond the Delaware. On Friday I intend to reach Philadelphia, and that before night. I pray the gentlemen not to think of coming so far as Trenton, nor even Bristol. If they meet me a few miles from Philadelphia, on Friday afternoon, they will give a proof of their respect quite as acceptable to me, and quite as convincing to the public, as if they should come to Trenton. I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

END OF VOL. I.

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